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MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTHWEST



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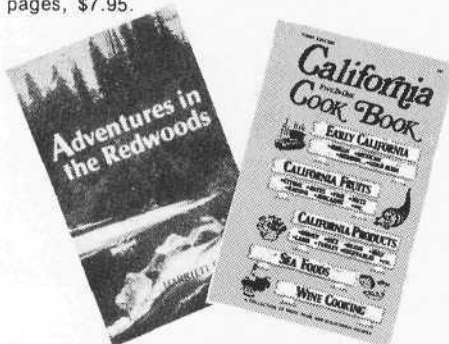
GOLDEN CHIA by Harrison Doyle. The only reference book on the chia plant and seed. This book illustrates the great difference between the high desert chia, and the Mexican variety sold in the health food stores. If you study, practice and take to heart, especially the last ten pages of this nutritionally up-to-date, newly revised book, you will find many answers you've been searching for to the achievement of health and well being, lengthen your life expectancy measureably, and be 99% less susceptible to disease of any sort. Fourth printing, 105 pages, illustrated. Paperback \$4.75, cloth, \$7.75.

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HANS KLEIBER, Artist of the Bighorn Mountains by Emmie Mygatt and Roberta Cheney. A man who loved nature above all, this legacy of Hans Kleiber's superb etchings and paintings is admirably presented by the authors as a glimpse into the experiences which served as background and inspiration for his art. Horizontal 8½"x11 format, 74 etchings, 22 paintings, aquatints, photographs, cloth bound, boxed, \$17.95.

SELDOM SEEN SLIM by Tom Murray. Profiles and vignettes of the colorful "single blanket jackass prospectors" who lived and died as they looked for gold and silver in Death Valley. Slick paperback, exclusive photos of the old-timers, 65 pages, \$3.00.

RAY MANLEY'S SOUTHWESTERN INDIAN ARTS AND CRAFTS is a full color presentation of the culture of the Southwest including jewelry, pottery, baskets, rugs, kachinas, Indian art and sandpaintings. 225 color photographs, interesting descriptive text. Heavy paperback, 96 pages, \$7.95.



ADVENTURES IN THE REDWOODS by Harriett E. Weaver. Miss Weaver, California's first woman park ranger, tells the fascinating history of the giant redwood, and in addition, gives a detailed guide to all major redwood groves in both the coastal and Sierra regions. Beautifully illustrated, paperback, 160 pages, \$2.95.

WHERE TO FIND GOLD IN THE MOTHER LODGE by James Klein. As in his *Where to Find Gold in the Desert* and *Where to Find Gold in Southern California*, author Klein guides you to the areas in which people are doing the best now. He includes history, tips on equipment needed, how to pan, how to stake claims, etc. Paperback, 121 pages, illustrated with photos and maps, \$4.95 each.

BAJA CALIFORNIA GUIDE by Cliff Cross includes highway information on the new trans-peninsula highway, accommodations, etc. All updated material, 60 maps, 450 photos, large format, \$4.95.

TREASURE HUNTER'S MANUAL #7 by Karl von Mueller. Treasure, or treasure trove, may consist of anything having a cash or convertible value; money in all forms, bullion, jewelry, guns, gems, heirlooms, genuine antiques, rare letters and documents, rare books and much, much more. This complete manual covers every facet of treasure hunting. Paperback, 293 pages, illustrated, \$6.50.

WELLS FARGO, The Legend by Dale Robertson. In his personal narrative style, the author has recreated the Wells Fargo legend, bringing to life the Concord stage, Black Bart, the intrepid stage drivers, the California Gold Rush and Nevada silver strike. Beautiful illustrations by Roy Purcell. Paperback, 154 pages, \$4.95.

WILDLIFE OF THE SOUTHWEST DESERTS by Jim Cornett. Written for the layman and serious students alike, this is an excellent book on all of the common animals of the Southwest deserts. A must for desert explorers, it presents a brief life history of everything from ants to burros. Paperback, 80 pages, illustrated, \$2.99.

FORKED TONGUES AND BROKEN TREATIES Edited by Donald E. Worcester. This book gives us a better understanding of the unequal struggle of native against immigrant while our nation was being explored and settled. Profusely illustrated with excellent photos, a "must" reference for historians, students, librarians. Hardcover, 494 pages, \$9.95.

NEW TITLES AT EXCEPTIONAL SAVINGS

ROCK ART OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN, by Campbell Grant. This extensively illustrated volume presents an over-all survey of Indian rock art covering an extraordinary variety of subjects, styles and techniques. Identifies motifs and their probable meanings, correlates them with regional and tribal cultures and migrations, and locates major sites of rock art throughout the continent. Hardcover, 178 pages, extensive Bibliography and Index, originally published at \$12.95, now \$5.98.

THE AMERICAN WEST, A Natural History by Ann and Myron Sutton. A first-hand information-packed description of the plant and animal life and geological evolution of the 15 major natural areas of America's West, illustrated with magnificent photos (71 in color) and maps, makes it clear just why the forests, animals, flowers, rivers, deserts and caves of the Land of the Big Sky are exactly as they are. Large 10"x12½" format, hardcover, 272 pages, originally published at \$25.00, now only \$12.98.

DOWN THE COLORADO: The Diary of the First Trip Through the Grand Canyon, photographs and epilogue by Eliot Porter. Contains John Wesley Powell's dramatic journal of 1869 when ten men in four boats swept down the raging Colorado River, over rapids considered impassable, to chart the unexplored river and its surrounding canyons. Includes a 48-page gallery of four-color photographs by America's foremost photographer of nature. Hardcover, large 10¼"x14¾" format, 168 pages. Originally published at \$30.00, now priced at \$9.98.

ROAMING THE AMERICAN WEST by D. E. Bower. Superbly detailed adventure and activity guide to 110 scenic, historic and natural wonders in 11 Western states for the family and sportsmen—from dinosaur stamping grounds in Colorado through ghost towns, prehistoric Indian villages, abandoned mines, wilderness areas, etc. Lavishly illustrated with photos and driving maps. Large format, hardcover, originally published at \$12.50, now priced at \$4.98.

STAGECOACH WEST by Ralph Moody. The lively story of stagecoaching in the West, which provided the lines of rapid communication, hauled the wealth of a new nation, and helped Americans settle the region between the Missouri and the Pacific. Well illustrated, including many detailed maps. Hardcover, 341 pages, originally published at \$8.95, now only \$3.98.

A HISTORY OF THE COMSTOCK SILVER LODGE AND MINES, Nevada and the Great Basin Region, Lake Tahoe and the High Sierras, by Don De Quille [William Wright]. Gives an excellent description of Nevada mining, particularly in the period of its greatest productivity. Also includes history of the region, its geography and development. Hardcover, one of the "America's Pioneer Heritage" Series, 158 pages, originally published at \$6.95, now priced at \$2.95.

THE WESTERNERS by Dee Brown. The author follows the frontiersman into his heroic world—tells the story of early explorers, trappers, fur traders, Forty-niners, builders and operators of stagecoach and mail services, telegraphs and railroads—through the experience of a few influential, representative Westerners—white men, white women and Indians. Hardcover, beautifully illustrated with color and black and white photos, 288 pages, originally published at \$17.95, now priced at \$7.98.

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THE GOLD MINES OF CALIFORNIA: Two Guidebooks. Includes *California and Its Gold Regions* by Fayette Robinson. A typical guidebook which was rushed from the presses to sell to the Forty-niners; and *California in 1850 Compared With What It Was in 1849, With a Glimpse At Its Future Destiny* by Franklin Street. More realistic and lacking the flamboyant optimism which marred most of the 1849 guides. Hardcover, another in the "America's Pioneer Heritage" Series, originally published at \$10.00, now only \$2.95.

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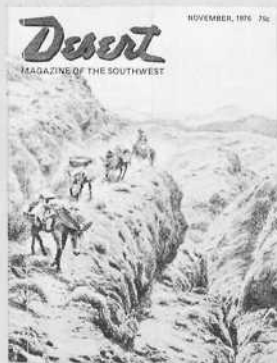
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THE COVER:
"Headin' for Higrade" is a
12"x17" water-colored
etching by artist Roy Pur-
cell, created especially for
this issue. See article on
Page 24. Cover and center-
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A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

OUR NOVEMBER cover is the handiwork of Roy Purcell, of Henderson, Nevada and sets the tone for this year's Death Valley issue. Roy is the artist responsible for the murals near Chloride, Arizona which many readers have inquired about. More samples of his fine work appear in this issue with an article written by a great fan of his, noted film actor Chill Wills. Wills writes in a folksy manner, but you can tell he really "digs" Roy's artistry. Roy and his etchings will be at the art show portion of the Death Valley '49er Encampment, being held November 11-14. Let's all get together and help the '49ers celebrate one of America's truly great festivals.

Mary Frances Strong searches for sagenite in the Owlshead Mountains this month, and Harold O. Weight deals with one of the '49ers, William Rood and his Death Valley wanderings. Howard Neal's "ghost" is Darwin, California, and Bill Jennings brings us up to date on the dirt roads in Death Valley.

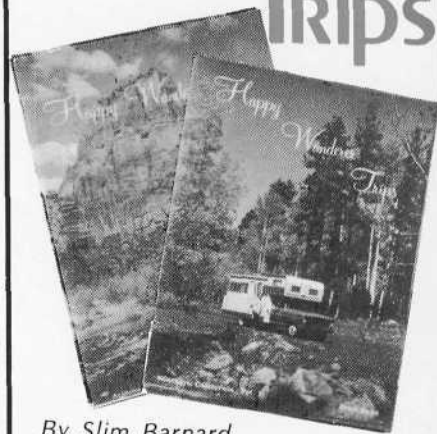
Frank Taylor has a tale about the late Seldom Seen Slim of Ballarat fame, and Joe Kraus' "\$7,000 Before Breakfast" is my idea of how to start your day.

Roger Mitchell takes us to the archeological ruins of Paquime, Mexico, and Naturalist K. L. Boynton rounds out the issue with *Eleodes Armata*, that most interesting desert stink bug.

I would like to thank the many concerned readers who wrote in to see how we fared in the recent flash flood in Palm Desert. We were most fortunate in escaping any problems in Riverside County's worst natural disaster which caused an estimated \$43 million damage.

William Kraus

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By Slim Barnard

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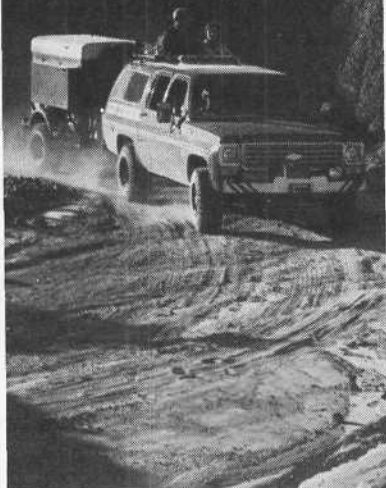
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FETISHES
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of the Southwest

By Oscar T. Branson

Using the same beautiful all-color format as his *TURQUOISE: The Gem of the Centuries*, Mr. Branson has now added

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Just what *is* a fetish? It is a very special carving of animals or other living things which have special significance to most of the Southwestern Indian tribes, especially the Zuni. Known to exist since prehistoric times, these objects, usually attractive, but sometimes unattractive, are thought to bring good fortune such as freedom from disease, flourishing crops, fertility, etc. Fetishes are being found in archeological sites, dating well over 1000 years, that equal or surpass some of the best carvings being done today.

Although all the tribes make and use them, the Zuni have become the most skillful carvers and produce the most appealing figures on the market today. The Navajos make their own fetishes, but will also barter from the Zuni figures of horses, cattle, sheep or goats in the belief that these amulets will keep their flock free from disease and insure propagation.

Fetishes, amulets and talismans are related objects and people seem to have different meanings for each, but the feeling and belief behind all of them is related. Not only the Indians, but people all over the world have made and used fetishes since the beginning of time. The belief in them, and the use of them is still very much alive.

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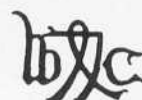
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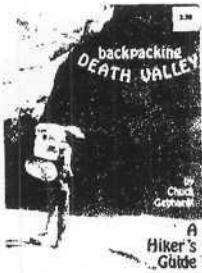
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BACKPACKING DEATH VALLEY By Chuck Gebhardt

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BAJA CALIFORNIA by Choral Pepper. Packed in this comparatively small book is a world of facts about the land, the insects, vegetation, the seashore, the missionaries, vanished missions, lost treasures and strange stories, tall and true, of Baja California. Fascinating reading. Paperback, 126 pages, \$2.95.

FLORA OF BAJA NORTE by Tina Kasbeer. The author is a botanist who spends all her free time in Baja and writes in detail of the endemic plants of the country. Describes the use of certain plants for medicinal purposes by the Indians and residents. Paperback, illus. 36 pages, \$1.00.

BAJA CALIFORNIA OVERLAND by L. Burr Belden. Practical guide to Lower California as far as La Paz by auto with material gleaned from extensive study trip sponsored by University of California. Includes things to see and accommodations. Paperback, \$1.95.

NEW BAJA HANDBOOK for the Off-Pavement Motorist in Lower California by James T. Crow. Discover the real Baja that lies beyond the edge of the paved road, the unspoiled, out-of-the-way places unknown to the credit-card tourist. The author, drawing from his extensive travels in these parts, tells where to go, what to take along, the common sense of getting ready. Illustrated, paperback, 95 pages, \$3.95.

CAMPING AND CLIMBING IN BAJA by John W. Robinson. Contains excellent maps and photos. A guidebook to the Sierra San Pedro Martir and the Sierra Juarez of upper Baja Calif. Much of this land is unexplored and unmapped still. Car routes to famous ranches and camping spots in palm-studded canyons with trout streams tempt weekend tourists who aren't up to hiking. Paperback, 96 pages, \$2.95.

PALM CANYONS OF BAJA CALIFORNIA by Randall Henderson. The beautiful palm canyons and isolated areas of Baja California are described by the late Randall Henderson, founder of *DESERT Magazine*. Although these are his personal adventures many years ago, little has changed and his vivid writing is alive today as it was when he first saw the oases. Paperback, illustrated, 72 pages, \$1.95.

BEACHES OF BAJA by Walt Wheelock. Beaches on the Pacific side of Lower California are described by the veteran Baja explorer. Unlike California beaches, they are still relatively free of crowds. Paperback, illustrated, 72 pages, \$1.95.

BYROADS OF BAJA by Walt Wheelock. In addition to describing the many highways now being paved, this veteran Baja explorer also tells of back country roads leading to Indian ruins, missions and abandoned mines. Paperback, illustrated, 72 pages, \$1.95.

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Sagebrush has overgrown the main street of Stanton. Wooden walkways, tested by Drew Cyprian, has a few missing boards. It fronts Stanton's hotel.

\$7000 Before Breakfast!

by JOE KRAUS

ARIZONA'S PUBLICITY people have long lured the multitudes to that fair state by enticing prospective visitors with such names as the Grand Canyon, the Painted Desert and the Petrified Forest. What they don't talk about all that much are the state's ghost towns.

Symbols of failure, man's greed and ruthlessness—certainly Arizona's ghost towns are all that. But they are also the foundations of the state's history, brief glimpses of a past now often clouded by the fictional writings of modern-day novelists and playwrights.

Octave, Weaver and Stanton are three such ghost towns. They are located together, litterly back to back, six miles by dirt road east of Congress and Highway 89. And if you appreciate the emptiness, the faded glories—everything a ghost town should—you'll appreciate these towns that are no more.

Here, on most days, you can be alone. Here you can sit on the sun-bleached steps of the old Stanton Hotel and gaze at a tumbleweed rolling down an empty street. Only the wind will be heard as it flaps ancient shutters and whistles through empty hallways. Here there is peace, a special solitude that can never

be forgotten. Former inhabitants left only dreams and ambitions. Some left a relative or two under the thick Arizona sod. For us, they left a few buildings, nothing more, to mark their stay.

In Octave, Stanton and Weaver there are no restaurants, motels, service stations or gift shops. There are no people—only a few weekend prospectors who attempt to rake from the land the yellow and silver ore that early-day miners left behind.

It's all quite different from their hey-day when wagon trains, stagecoaches and buckboards filled the streets, when lone riders and circuit preachers sought lodging for the night. And certainly it is much quieter now than in those days of constant gunplay, when the law was much too far away to offer any assistance.

Weaver, for instance, was probably Yavapai County's toughest town. In its early days, the town was so tough that lawmen made no attempt to track down outlaws inside its limits. Its reputation as a hangout for desperadoes had spread throughout the territory so much so that only top hands with a gun dared enter. Nevertheless Weaver became so big that

it was nominated to become the territorial capital. When election time came around, however, the town lost to Prescott only because the men were too engrossed with the saloons and dancehall girls to take time out for voting.

Stanton, as far as rowdiness goes, didn't perform much better. This town was especially known for its gunplay and unfriendliness. The town's father, Charles Stanton, for instance, was certainly no George Washington. Much disliked in the district for his treacherous dealings, shootings and misappropriation of gambling dues, he also had quite another reputation. It was said he had been expelled from a monastery on charges of immorality while studying for the priesthood. But just as Stanton sent many others before him to an early grave, he, too, fell victim to this same fate. He was shot and killed by a man from Weaver who headed a gang of desperadoes.

Less resourceful in shoot-em-up activities was the town of Octave. Its people seemed much more concerned with the gold that still remained in the foothills. Stories were still circulating there of the man who one morning stumbled upon a deposit of gold and before breakfast picked up over \$7,000 worth of the rich metal. So, not only did the people of Octave hang up their guns to handle picks and shovels, but they seemed even less concerned than were the inhabitants of Weaver and Stanton in maintaining a town. Thus, you won't find much of it left.

You must get out of your car and scout around to find anything of the town still standing. Behind the rocks and the sagebrush, however, you will find stone foundations, cellar pits, remains of a powder-house, a few fences and skeleton door and window frames,

Weaver's remains are much more prevalent. Two almost complete structures line Weaver's main street. And here and there you will discover the remains of miners cabins. Over the rise you'll even find the town's Boothill, telling, if nothing else, how quick and final death was in Weaver.

Lena Dean [left], Drew Cyprian and Linda Dean discover the old Stanton Hotel that was, in its day, the "Hilton" of the Rich Hill area. The young people live on nearby ranches.

Of the three towns, Stanton is the best preserved and probably the most interesting. Here are the remains of the old Stanton Hotel now ever much showing signs of its years. You'll also find, directly across the street, the old stage station and general store. Constructed of red brick, it stands windowless and empty. Stage agent and former proprietor Barney Martin was run out of town and later killed by none other than Charles Stanton.

Another interesting building in Stanton is an early-day residence. Its crumbling walls, however, along with those of the Stanton Hotel, general store and stage station awaits the encroachment of the ever-present desert environment.

Further up the street, almost out of view, is a series of other early-day buildings. Preserved, they are now used as dormitories for a youth camp. These camper's, when present, have a unique experience of spending their nights in a well-preserved ghost town. Near these structures is the home of a caretaker whose permission you need before entering the town.

It may be strange that this ghost town (or any ghost town for that matter) has, in part, been turned into a summer

camp. Probably ever stranger still is the fact that the town was once owned by the magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post*. The magazine bought the town about 20 years ago with the thought of restoring the community to a mecca such as Virginia City, Nevada. This just didn't work out. So the *Post* people got together and decided that what they would do with the town was give it away. And that's just what they did—in a jingle contest.

Today, however, the allure of Stanton, Weaver and Octave is not so much the number of buildings that remain—because there aren't really that many. Nor do people come for all the gold that supposedly the miners left behind. There just isn't much of that either. Stanton, Weaver and Octave should be visited for no other reason than the fact they are there. In a few years they may be gone altogether. Then all you will have will be the Virginia Cities and Tombstones, gone so much by way of commercialism, or the Old Tucsons and Apachelands, built by movie-set carpenters, never really towns to begin with.

There is no comparing these with the real ghosts, their emptiness, their faded glories. They are the very fiber of our historic past. □



SELDOM SEEN Slim

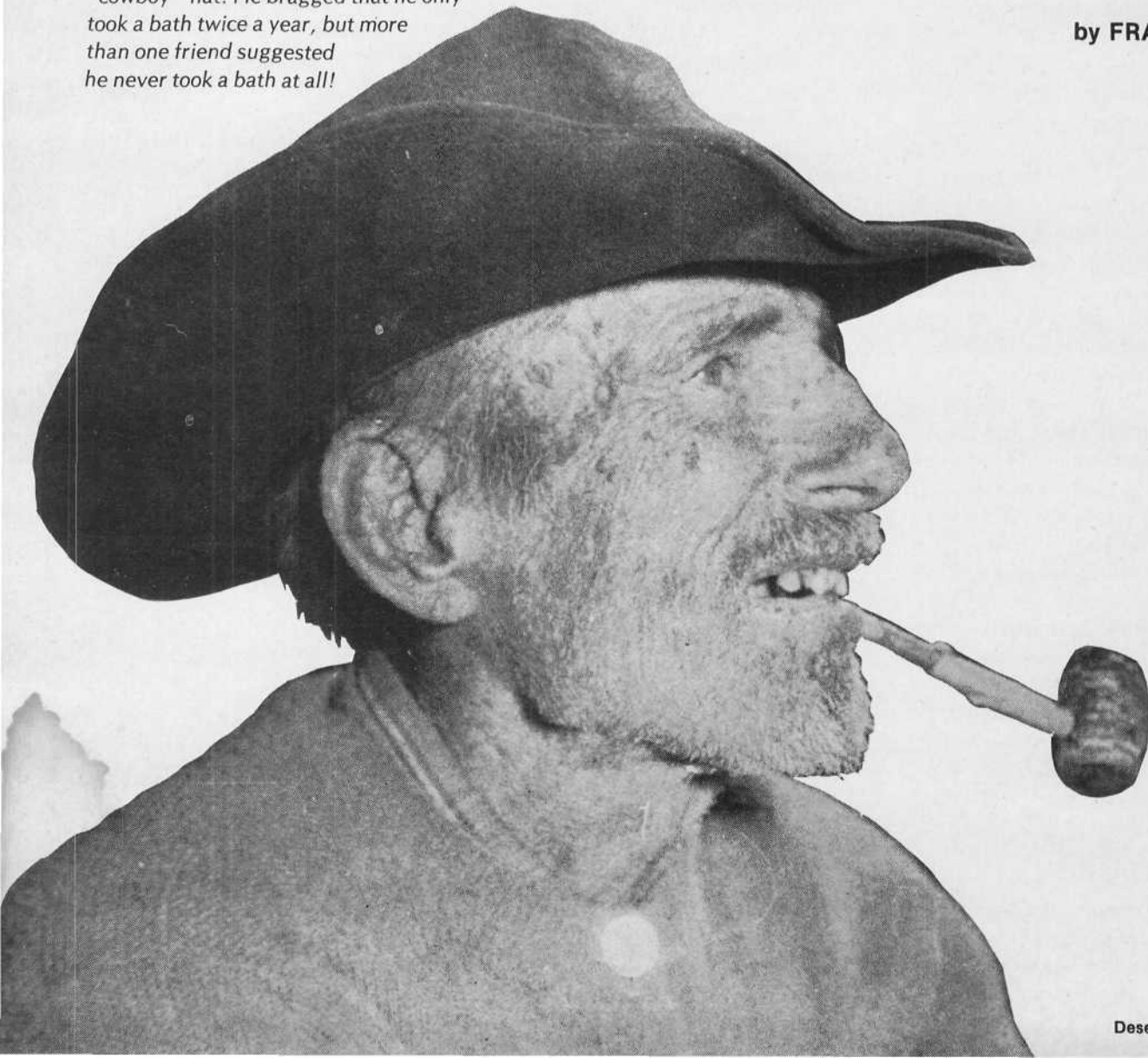
FROM "THE SUBURBS of Hell"

Slim was never seen without his corncob pipe and wornout felt "cowboy" hat. He bragged that he only took a bath twice a year, but more than one friend suggested he never took a bath at all!

HE WAS the kind of man that, if born in another era, would probably have been a trapper or Indian fighter. Instead, because most of the other occupations were obsolete by the time he was born, Seldom Seen Slim, or Charles Ferge became a prospector and eventually, a full time legend and desert rat.

The place he called home was once referred to as: "The suburbs of Hell," and anyone who was unfortunate enough to visit Ballarat, California during the summer months would have agreed this was the correct selection of a name. Even when it was booming, Ballarat

by FRANK TAYLOR



wasn't much to talk about. After it stopped booming and started to decay, it was hardly fit for even the occasional packrats that called it home, but that seemed to be just the kind of place Ferge liked.

In fact, Seldom Seen Slim liked the location so well he stayed there for more than 50 years. The town was on its last legs in 1917 when Slim moved in. He was almost the last man then, and it remained that way for decades. For nearly 35 years, Slim was the sole resident. He never complained about the lack of company, because for some reason, people like Slim seem to prefer their own company to anyone else's.

What supported him? A few people guessed his discoveries in the Panamint Mountains, that are known to be rich in silver ore, might have financed his meager existence. Others thought he might have been rich at one time and simply saved the money for better times. It is doubtful if anyone really knew for sure, because Slim was the kind of man that kept his own counsel.

He didn't talk a lot, even when he was surrounded by friends he liked. The desert solitude must have made him lose the urge to talk very much. It wasn't that Slim didn't have a lot to say, he did. It just didn't come out very often!

The early beginnings of Ferge were his own well-kept secret. He had once been to the huge San Fernando Valley north of Los Angeles, but didn't go any further toward the blossoming City of Los Angeles than that. "I didn't like it," he explained simply. He is known to have been to Las Vegas at least once in the pre-gambling days, but like Southern California, Slim didn't care much for the place.

Why he came to Ballarat is a mystery. When he first set foot in the town in 1917, it still had a few vestiges of its former glory. Founded in the 1890s when gold was discovered nearby, the town took its name from an Australian gold camp. The town was made from adobe, logs, lumber torn out of houses in nearby Panamint City, and rocks—whatever was handy and cheap.

Most of the old wood buildings were still standing when Slim came down the main drag, carrying all his earthly belongings (so legend says) on a pack burro. Some romantic accounts of Slim's life claim he was a fugitive from the law

who came to this remote outpost of civilization to escape the prying eyes of lawmen.

The only thing that seems certain was his arrival. Seldom Seen Slim didn't arrive to become the caretaker over the next 50 years of a ghost town, but that is what happened to him. His "calling" as a ghost town curator seemed to settle on his thin shoulders like a mantle. At times, Slim, himself, seemed bewildered by events.

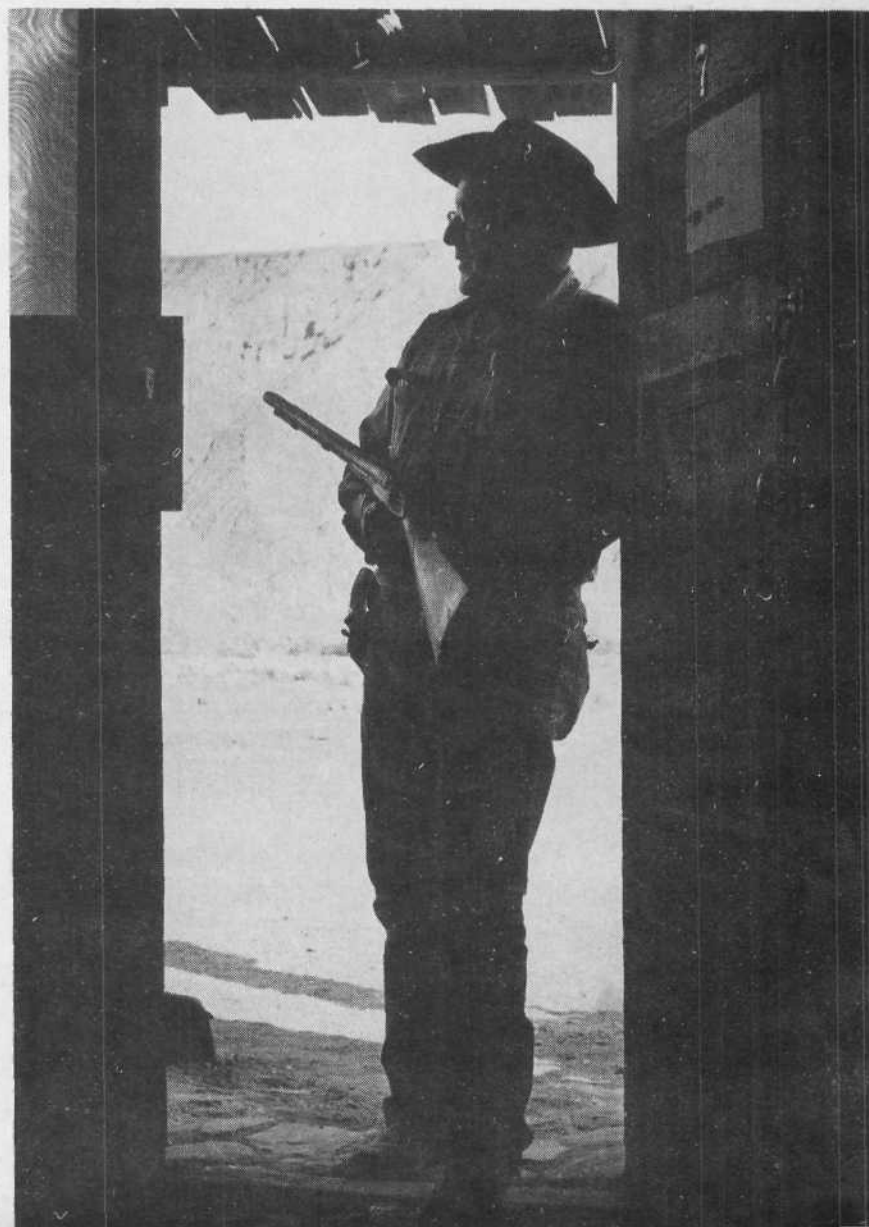
On one of our frequent trips to see Slim, the author and his family sought out the scattered remnants of shade around his trailer while he explained how he discovered he was the last man in town. "One day I looked around and I realized I was the only one here—had been for years. I decided then I was living in a ghost town for sure."

Slim was surrounded by complete solitude in his desert retreat except when in-

frequent visitors stopped to say hello, but in its heyday, Ballarat was a hell-raising gold camp whose reputation was spread far and wide by its evil citizens. Like its sister towns, Panamint and Panamint City, Ballarat lived a wild and lusty life even though it was a short one. After his arrival, there wasn't much of a spark of life. Yet, somehow, it clung to life, and Ferge managed to keep body and soul together by prospecting in the hills, or reworking old silver mine tailings in the abandoned camps by Ballarat. As the decades wore on, Slim staked out several claims for himself, but most of them were informal. There wasn't much need in going to the County Recorder's office and making things official, hardly anyone even ventured into this part of the desert—so the danger of claim jumpers was slight.

Water became a problem. The original site of the town was chosen because it

Duffy Duffield operated a small store and museum at Ballarat before Slim's death, and would regal customers by the hours on the exploits of his desert rat friend across the "street."



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was possible to extract a brackish, mineral-filled water from the desert without too much effort. As things decayed, the water table sank and in time, Slim was left without a regular source of water. How the water tasted was of little concern to the miners who founded Ballarat. They hardly used it except for animal needs or an occasional bath. Whiskey was their drink.

By the 1950s, Slim was hauling water in a junk automobile to his camp. Usually the water was picked up in Trona, a trip of about 30 miles that includes crossing the Slate Range. A steep grade made the trip more difficult, and several times Slim found himself standing next to a disabled automobile, thumbing a ride with his water cans.

Taking all this with characteristic good humor, Ferge would tell visitors, "I live 30 miles from a drink of water!" That was pretty much the truth. He seemed to get a great deal of satisfaction from the rigors and hardships of his life, and the more privations he was called upon to endure, the more he appeared to thrive.

One year, a fire swept through much of Ballarat, and when the ashes had cooled, Slim found the building he had taken over as a home was gone. He threw up a rude leanto, started life anew, and several years later, an old trailer was added to his camp. Like most bachelors, Slim was an indifferent housekeeper. One look inside the cramped quarters was enough to convince the visitor he was far better off to stay outside and talk with Slim. The inside looked like a disaster area.

Slim preferred the outdoors, anyway, and spent as much time as he could puttering around the grounds or sitting in the warm desert sun—a favorite occupation that in the later years of his life consumed much of his waking hours. "I'm like a sundial," he grinned. "I move with the sun all day long. When it moves, I move with it."

While he was still able to travel, Slim would venture out on foot, or in a car if he had one, to check on the mining claims he had scattered around the desert. Because he had been there so long, Slim also knew where other producing claims had been that the owners had abandoned. These he kept a close check on as well. But it was the modern world that eventually brought Slim his greatest fortune—although it never



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amounted to much.

The United States government established the China Lake Naval Air Station on the fringes of the desert near Slim, and started a regular program of aircraft training flights. The old prospector was surprised to find a drone aircraft smashed into the earth of his mining claim. Unfamiliar with the wonders of radio-controlled flight, Slim spent several hours looking for the pilot.

Unable to find one, he drove to the China Lake facility to report his demise. Loaded into the back of his vehicle were several of the largest pieces of the drone. The officials at the base were careful not to hurt the old man's feelings, and after explaining no funeral would be necessary, offered to let him have the remains of the drone as payment for his trouble.

"They told me to sell it for scrap if I wanted to," he remembered in later years, "so I hauled the whole thing to the junk yard and made some cash. That was the most money I ever got out of that claim, I think!"

Another source of income for Slim was rock samples. His intimate knowledge of the local desert enabled him to gather interesting samples that rockhounds were willing to pay hard cash for. To Slim, this type of sample was worthless chaff, but if people would buy them, he was happy to oblige them. He certainly could never have gotten rich, however. Prices for his samples were flexible. A nickle, dime or once in a while "two-bits." When he was chided for selling his samples at such low prices, Slim would shrug his shoulders and retort: "But I got them free!"

Certainly Slim was not greedy. Like many other prospectors, the thrill was in looking for a rich strike, not in making one. He was far more content to have the modern world beat a path to his door and visit, than he ever would have been to hit "pay dirt" and retire to some luxury spa with his profits. Most of his life had been spent in the unsuccessful quest for mineral wealth, and he resigned himself to the fact he would never be rich sometime early in his career at Ballarat.

Ferge was fortunate in this. He could still chase rainbows and not suffer from the pangs of disappointment. This was one reason he needed very little money to get by on. A few groceries, tobacco for his pipe, gas for his vehicle (if he had one running) and some clothes once in a

while sufficed. He didn't exactly reject society, nor its comforts, it was just that most of the time luxuries just seemed too much trouble.

One of his hundreds of friends gave him a radio that worked on batteries, and that was a gift he treasured. Often at night, strangers approaching the Ferge trailer would hear the strains of classical music pouring from the interior. There were hardly ever any lights. Slim didn't have electricity and a lamp using kerosene was too dangerous in the tiny confines, so he would go to sleep in the dark listening to the thunder of the world's great symphony orchestras.

When questioned about his seemingly peculiar taste in music, Slim would just shrug, "I can't get the other stations." What he meant was this. At night, radio stations with at least 50,000 watts of power transmit great distances and in the desert it is possible to pick up KLS from Salt Lake City, or places like Oklahoma City or New Mexico. The station Slim seemed to get most frequently was one that broadcast a heavy program of classic music.

But after almost 40 years of near isolation, things began to change for Slim. To the south, Los Angeles became the hub of existence for hundreds of thousands of rockhounds, four-wheel-drive enthusiasts, motorcycle buffs and ghost town explorers. As the exodus of the previous 60 years had brought a stampede of gold-seekers to this nearly forgotten corner of the desert, so the explosion of the 1950-60s brought an influx of city dwellers bent on learning more about the desert and like Seldom Seen Slim.

Harry Oliver, himself a self-proclaimed "desert rat," was publishing a newspaper called "The Desert Rats Scrap Book (and that is the way he spelled it, too!)," and he started to include sayings by Ferge. The scrapbook found its way across the world, and into universities, colleges and the homes of the great and mighty. The salty comments attributed to Seldom Seen Slim kept people chuckling and in the literary world, Ferge became a minor celebrity.

This kind of publicity might have gone to the head of a lesser man, but not Slim. He would snort at some of the things he was supposed to have said in the Desert Rats Scrap Book, but he kept on reading the little newspaper. As rockhounds,

Continued on Page 40

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Darwin, California

LOCATION: Darwin is located six miles from California Highway 190, southeast of Owens Lake and the community of Keeler.

BRIEF HISTORY: In the summer of the year 1876, the silver camp of Darwin reached its zenith. Rich ore deposits were being mined, five furnaces were operating and the population of the town had passed the one thousand mark.

The word was out. People throughout the desert mining country were speculating that the fabulous Lost Gunsight had been discovered. That

famous silver lode had been found, and lost, by members of the Death Valley party of 1849.

Many had searched for the Lost Gunsight, including Doctor Darwin French who, in 1860, had led a group of prospectors and explorers across the Coso, Argus and Panamint Mountains to Death Valley. The French party discovered gold at Coso, seven miles south of the site of Darwin, but the Gunsight silver eluded them.

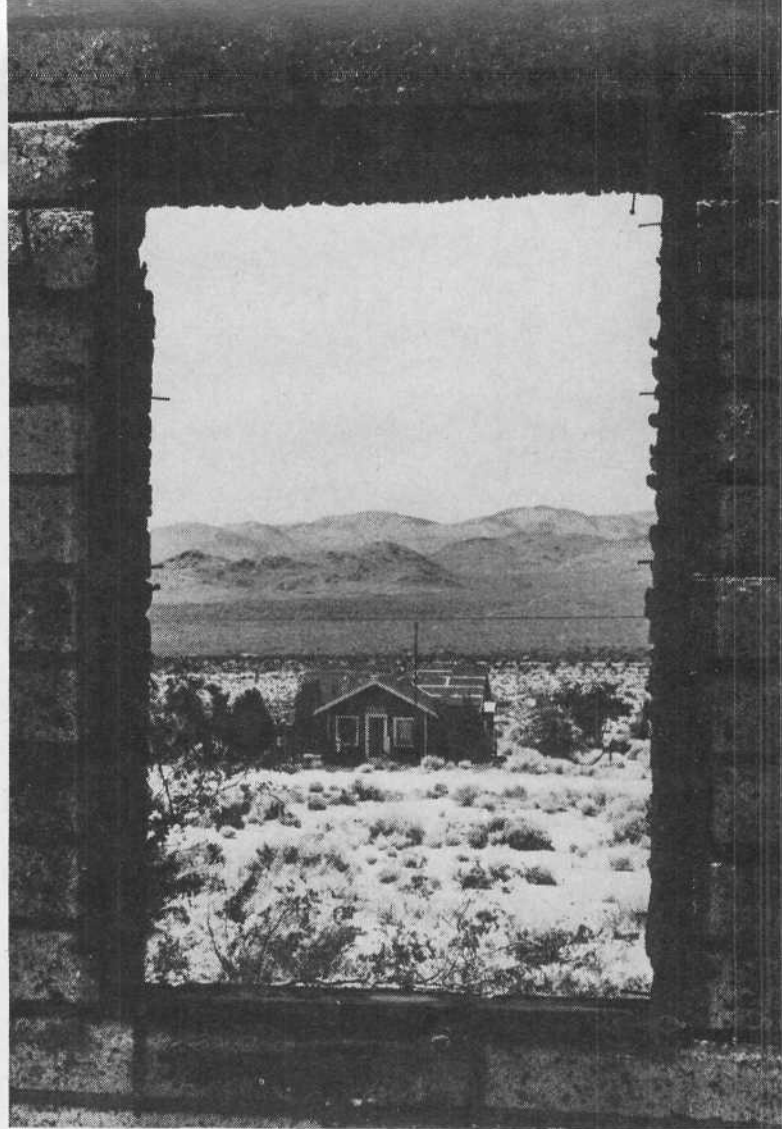
The Darwin silver also eluded them. But, when it was discovered, the district was named in honor of Doctor French.



Silver was discovered on Mount Ophir in October of 1874. The relative proximity of the strike to Panamint City and Cerro Gordo caused an immediate rush. By the time 1875 drew to a close, Darwin boasted more than 200 permanent structures and near 1,000 citizens. The Defiance, and the other smelters, worked night and day. Several times a day, freight wagons loaded with silver bullion left Darwin. At night, the Centennial and 14 other saloons rollicked with the laughter of the miners and the saloon girls. Darwin was booming.

The boom at Darwin was quick. It took less than two years for the mining district to reach its peak. Starting in August of 1876, when the smelters started closing, the road for Darwin was down. Just as Darwin had drawn its population from Cerro Gordo and Panamint, so did Bodie and Mammoth City draw their citizens, in part, from Darwin. The final blow came in 1878 when a labor disagreement turned into a small shooting war and Darwin was moved quickly along the path toward becoming another desert ghost.

DARWIN TODAY: As you walk Darwin's streets, today as it was yesterday, the dust from your footsteps rises to mingle with the clear desert air. And, the summer sun is hot. You can almost see that heat reach out of the sky to bleach the many headframes and mine buildings that attest to Darwin's beginnings. The homes of the town's few citizens are interspersed with the many ruins of yesteryear providing a quiet contrast of life and hope for the future with the rowdy history of a bygone era. □



Above: The homes of Darwin's few citizens are interspersed with many ruins that remind the visitor of a bygone era.

Right: At the entrance to the town of Darwin, a bridge, carrying a pipe from a nearby smelter, crosses the main road.

Left: "Private Property—Keep Out" signs forbid the exploration of the mine buildings. Photographs by Howard Neal.



"OR JEEPS ONLY" is a common warning sign on maps and at road heads throughout the desert vastness—so common that many motorists are prone to take the admonition too lightly.

Would-be backcountry drivers in Death Valley National Monument, who have taken a five-minute course in off-highway technique (generally self-taught in a vacant lot), have learned to their sorrow that nothing is less forgiving in life than a deep ditch, a rain-cut furrow across the sandy track or an innocent appearing soft sand patch perhaps or perhaps not leavened by a thin film of equally deceptive water. Broken springs, bent wheels and up-to-the-frame miring in quicksand are among the cheaper lessons—and very few tow trucks venture into the outback to retrieve you.

So it was with great pleasure that a new National Park Service-inspired publication titled "Dirt Road Travel and Back Country Camping in Death Valley National Monument" wandered into view. It was printed last April as part of the current Death Valley Natural History Association tourist package. Just in time for the current 27th Annual Death Valley National Encampment.

It is basically a complete off-highway road and trail guide, a complete monument map on one side with descriptions of routes, campsites, mileages and other data on the reverse.

The first warning comes as you unfold the map. There is no such thing as off-road travel in Death Valley and only vehicles with valid state license plates will be allowed anywhere on the network of paved, graded and non-maintained roads within the 3,000-square-mile national reserve. No "greenies" or off-road registration stickers and no under-age unlicensed drivers are allowed.

A list of 14 monument off-highway roads for either four-wheel-drive or high center utility vehicles included with the map compares favorably with a compilation of 15 tours, ranging from a few hours to a few days, written by Roger Mitchell. His article appeared in the November, 1969 issue of *Desert Magazine*.

Assuming you may tire of the organized activities, or if you just want to get away for an hour or three days, this report is for you.

In the vastness of Death Valley Na-

Dirt Road Travel in Death Valley

by BILL JENNINGS

tional Monument are hidden hundreds of canyons, complete with old mines, townsites, natural wonders by the score, ranging from tiny permanent streams to huge, variegated rock formations that will fill your color camera lens. There are forgotten but still discernible trails into history, remote outposts where wildlife roam unmolested. More than desert, the monument is a slice of the Southwest generally open and available to the off-highway motorist and hiker.

A warning, however, that backcountry roads are loosely defined, depending on whose map you read, ranging from incredibly bad Baja-style tracks that cause even hardened Jeeps to blanch, their

knuckles whitened on the transfer case shift lever, to graded albeit unpaved boulevards that support even those four-ton Detroit wonders. The monument listing differentiates by dividing the several hundred miles of off-highway routes into four-wheel-drive and high-clearance designations. The terms are self-descriptive but the driver is urged to make local inquiry at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center or any monument ranger station before embarking.

Copies of the guide and many other useful brochures for the off-highway traveler are available at Furnace Creek and the Grapevine, Emigrant and Wildrose ranger stations. Ask the ranger. He would rather answer your questions in advance than launch a search and winch party after the fact.

Be reminded that the road map is constantly changed, not so much by motor grader but the whimsical actions of Ma Nature. The original Women's Libber has been known to destroy hundred-year-old roads in five minutes with flash flooding, to sand them into oblivion with a week-long windstorm or crack, crunch or cover them with a 4.5 Richter Scale temblor. Inquire before you venture forth.

What follows is one writer's version of a backcountry tour guide that may bore the intrepid or awe the first-timer. In either case, you may wish to compile your own or pass it over in favor of the Authors Breakfast.

All have been driven, if not by the author recently, at least by someone possessed of a vehicle with ample power, usually to all four wheels, or with a high center that the Death Valley tracks do little more than brush. Some can be driven in an hour; others may take a half day, if you don't care much about scenery, geology or human history. Still others will be savored at leisure because overnight camping in Death Valley is encouraged off-highway with the observance of a few, simple and understandable rules.

None of these trips are intended for the freeway freighter or the timid. All are designed as a challenge of your skills with steering wheel and clutch, or the P-R-N-D(1-2-3) stick that subs for a gearshift in most vehicles today.

Local inquiry is mandatory in the Death Valley monument. All off-highway tours require a Back Country Check In/

*In order to protect areas
such as these mud-caked
dunes near Stovepipe Wells,
no off-road travel is permitted
within the Death Valley National
Monument. Photo by James Randklev,
Los Angeles, California.*





Getting above the valley floor affords dramatic and panoramic views such as this.

Out from at the visitor center or any ranger station before and after a hike or solo four-wheel-drive trip. Camping restrictions will be explained at the same time. You'll be pleasantly surprised at the minimum of no-no requirements the National Park Service has imposed.

With the exceptions spelled out below, most of these trips do not entail camping restrictions. Suggested maps include the monument off-highway model plus the "Guide to Death Valley" issued regularly by the Automobile Club of Southern California. Topographic maps of the monument area in both the 7½ and 15-minute scales are produced by the U.S. Geologic Survey and available at Death Valley sites as well as selected shops throughout Southern California. The Auto Club's maps for Inyo and San Bernardino counties also are useful.

HALF-DAY TRIPS

Keane Wonder Mine. Just four miles up in the Funeral Mountains from the Daylight Pass Highway, six miles from the junction with California 190, or a total of 18 miles from Furnace Creek, which will be the starting place for all these trips. There is no camping permitted either along the road or at the mine and mill site—no problem because of the short distances involved. The mine dates to a 1903 discovery by Jack Keane, one of the vivid figures in Death Valley

history. Portions of the mine works and the remnants of a huge 20-stamp mill mark the site. The area is near the distinctive Chloride Cliff, the destination for another short trip, described below.

Chloride cliff. An old mining camp and a geologically interesting area in the Funeral Mountains off the Daylight Pass Highway some three miles east of Hells Gate, one of the most distinctive natural entrances to Death Valley, from the northeastern or Nevada side. Mileage from Furnace Creek is 26. A park service sign at the turnoff shows the way to the cliff, a landmark for 49ers and other early Death Valley travelers. Another longer, but better road reaches the area from U.S. 95, about six miles south of Beatty, Nevada. The cliff is a photographic landmark as well, especially for the color fan.

Hole in the Wall. The closest site to Furnace Creek and the 49ers activities, therefore probably the busiest of these suggested trips. This scenic area is a prime geologic study site, a notch eroded by wind and water action through a 200-foot rock wall. Take California 190 from Furnace Creek eastward toward Death Valley Junction, five miles above the main north-south or Badwater Road junction. If your vehicle is stout enough you may drive about eight miles from the highway to Red Amphitheater, or as far

as the park service permits road travel. Heed the signs and stay on the designated route, which is primarily a four-wheel-drive trail.

Grotto Canyon. This is the shortest of the suggested 49er routes, only 1½ miles from sea level near Stovepipe Wells up 500 feet into a geologically-rewarding view site. No camping is permitted at road's end but it's a short run back to Stovepipe Wells or Furnace Creek area campgrounds. Several easy foot trails into eroded and colorful side canyons reward the vigorous. Warning! The road is not suited for lowslung cars. The sand dune area and famous Salt Creek are nearby.

Lemoigne Canyon. Sometimes almost forgotten in the rich history of the Death Valley region is the story of Jean (Cap) Lemoigne whose old stone cabin marks the site of a silver mining venture of nearly a century ago. The nine-mile trip begins from California 190 about six miles southwest of Stovepipe Wells Village and is hardly suited for anything but four-wheel-drive. In seven miles you climb 4,000 feet. Camping is permitted

FULL-DAY TRIPS

Echo Canyon. This familiar and continually popular off-highway trip starts from California 190 at the Travertine Springs cluster four miles southeast of Furnace Creek. The springs mark the first known water site for the 1849 wagon trains as they reached Death Valley from the Amargosa Desert to the east. The sandy and rocky canyon trail can be traversed all the way to Nevada State Route 29, midway between Death Valley Junction and Lathrop Wells, along the 1907-1918 right-of-way of the Las Vegas and Tonopah Railway. Many of the ties from this ill-fated line still remain at Scotty's Castle where Walter Scott planned their use as fence posts. Distance from Travertine Springs to the highway is 30 miles. Midway through the canyon is the site of Schwab, one of the early mining camps. Elevation at the canyon head is 5,000 feet.

Wingate Wash. It's a long way from monument headquarters at Furnace Creek to the mouth of Warm Springs Canyon, the jumping off place for historic Wingate Wash, route of the 20-mule team borax freighters from Death Valley to the railhead at Mojave. By way of the paved Badwater road it's nearly 46 miles and over 38 miles via the graded but

sometimes washboard West Side Road. It's worth the trip to re-create a part of the mule team saga. Only the lower 16 miles of the wash are open to travel, below the monument-Naval Weapons Center boundary. There are plenty of sandy and sometimes windswept camping sites in Wingate, but no reliable water.

Butte Valley-Goler Wash. One of the longest and most rewarding trips in Death Valley, primarily a Jeep road but open at the lower (east) end to high-center vehicles as well. Entry is via Warm Springs Canyon, the same front door as used by Wingate Wash travelers. Bear right at about three to 3½ miles west of the West Side Road where the Wingate tracks trail off to the left. Soon you will be in some of the most recently active mining area of the monument. Still-worked talc mines give way to the huge basin known as Butte Valley, with Striped Butte as its distinctive landmark. Some 15 miles west of the Wingate junction water may be found at Anvil Spring, sometimes, but it's a good idea here, as everywhere in the monument, to carry your own supply, about a gallon a day per person. The track tops out near Anvil at the ridge of the Panamint range and the careful Jeepster can pick his way down to the old Panamint Valley Road through Goler Wash. Be warned, the valley road deadends at the weapons center boundary about five miles south of the Goler Wash exit. The only way home is in reverse or north along the Panamint route. If you get this far you may consider this trip a two-nighter!

Johnson Canyon. Twenty miles south of the Badwater junction on the West Side Road is the signed entrance to Johnson Canyon. This is also the gateway to Hungry Bill's homestead high on the east slopes of Telescope Peak. No route for the faint-hearted or those unwilling to walk, this trip offers a glimpse into history as well as a portage across the Panamints to Panamint City if you're game. The canyon road proceeds about nine miles to a sometimes good spring and cottonwood grove, a fine camping site and the jumping-off place for the trail to Hungry Bill's homestead and the Panamint highlands. In the 1870s, a group of European immigrants, reportedly Swiss, settled in the upper canyon along the permanent stream and planted vegetables and fruit trees. They backpacked their produce across the Pana-

An early day mining road looks out on the desolate salt flats in Death Valley National Monument. Many feet below sea level, the valley offers ideal climate for winter holidays.



mint divide some 12 miles to Panamint City where the eager miners quickly parted with their hard-earned silver for some green fare. After the boom faded, the farmers departed and an almost legendary Shoshone Indian, Hungry Bill, homesteaded their rocky acres. Today the meager remnants of rock walls and some fruit trees mark the site.

Phinney Canyon. The highest elevation reached by a Jeep road in the monument touches 7500 feet on the east slope of Grapevine Peak, a distinctive marker along the California-Nevada border west of Beatty. Several four-wheel-drive trails crisscross the Phinney Canyon area, which also can be reached, almost, by a rough high-center route from U.S. 95 just south of Beatty. This is one of the few areas in or near the monument where the distinctive pinyon-juniper plant association is accessible. Campsites abound in the coniferous trees but water is elusive, so bring your own. One roundabout approach is via Rhyolite, the undying "ghost" town of the Bullfrog mining district west of Beatty. It's a 20-

mile trip to Phinney Canyon from U.S. 95, but well worth the two-day estimated travel and visiting time needed to really see the area. Grapevine, at 8738 feet the northeast guardian of Death Valley, is like its southwestern "twin," Telescope Peak, frequently snow covered in winter.

Hunter Mountain. Hidden away in the remote northwestern corner of the monument near the famous Racetrack are a number of old diggings and abandoned camps. The Jeep track from Teakettle Junction, between Ubehebe Crater and the Racetrack, reached the site of Goldbelt and the north escarpment of Hunter Mountain, 7280 feet, before it turns into a high-center road outside the monument and drops to California 190 near Darwin, only about 36 miles east of civilization at Lone Pine in Owens Valley. Fine stands of pinyon and juniper abound on this remote route.

This listing has not attempted to include all the popular and not-so-known off-highway routes within the monument. It's just a teaser for those who have time to find more! □

Sagenite in the

FOR OVER three decades, hardy rock collectors have journeyed into California's Owlshhead Mountains, west of Death Valley, in search of sagenite agate. Yet, the region shows little evidence of their presence except for a few shallow diggings and a faint trail to the top of a barren peak. The once rugged, 16-mile road, the steep hike and hard-rock mining were not for those who preferred "easy collecting." It was only the dedicated lapidary enthusiast, seeking elusive and beautiful sagenite, who felt the effort was worthwhile.

There is still good sagenite agate to be found, but the steep climb and hardrock mining remain the requirements for success. However, a good, graded road now replaces the former "helluva set of dirt tracks." I can vouch for the latter—having first driven the route 23 years ago and several times since. This "killer" of stock cars included a short section of road which dropped into the canyon. It didn't appear to harbor a problem when driving in; but, driving out was another matter. Many cars couldn't make it and several people were forced to make long hikes in order to obtain help.

On one of my trips, I found four collectors and two cars who had been there for three unscheduled days. Arriving on

Tuesday, they had planned to pull out on Friday but the cars could not negotiate the grade. They had elected to sit tight in the hope someone would come in during the weekend. When I showed up late Monday, they were getting desperate since their food and water were nearly gone. We quickly chained each car to my four-wheel-drive and the extra power brought them up and out in a few minutes.

It is at such times a CB mobil radio could bring much needed help. When stranded in a deep canyon, it might be necessary to remove radio, aerial and battery; then transport them to the top of a high hill in order to make a successful contact by radio. I am not implying this would be a simple matter but, in an emergency, it could be done.

Sagenite Canyon is a deep, flat-bottomed, T-shaped recess in the southeastern flank of the Owlshhead Mountains. This is flash-flood country and it is evident that numerous torrents of gravel-laden waters have been responsible for carving the canyon. This process still goes on today and it is not a place to be camped during summer thunder-shower activity.

The graded road we enjoy today is due to the establishment of a microwave re-

lay station on one of the higher peaks in the Owlshhead Mountains. There are many such stations across the desert and consequent improved access roads have been a "boon" for recreationists. Trailers and motorhomes can be taken into Sagenite Canyon—just drive carefully.

Good cutting material, particularly types from which unusually-patterned cabochons may be cut, is always in demand. Sagenite agate falls into this category and areas where it may be collected are not common. Generally speaking, when inclusions in agate or chalcedony are acicular, the material is called sagenite agate. The term sagenite is derived from a Greek word meaning "net"—referring to the pattern often formed by inclusions. However, patterns vary and sometimes are so dense the host material appears opaque.

Dana tells us the "inclusions have formed by precipitation of material that diffused into a mass of gelatinous silica before it crystallized into chalcedony." A variety of minerals can form the needle-like growths, including rutile, black tourmaline, actinolite, goethite, stibnite, hornblende, as well as zeolites and other fibrous hydrous silicates. The Owlshhead deposits include golden, white, black and some lavender sagenite. The colors



Owl Hole Spring is a tiny oasis in a hot and desolate region. A well was sunk at the site in an attempt to provide more water for the mill.

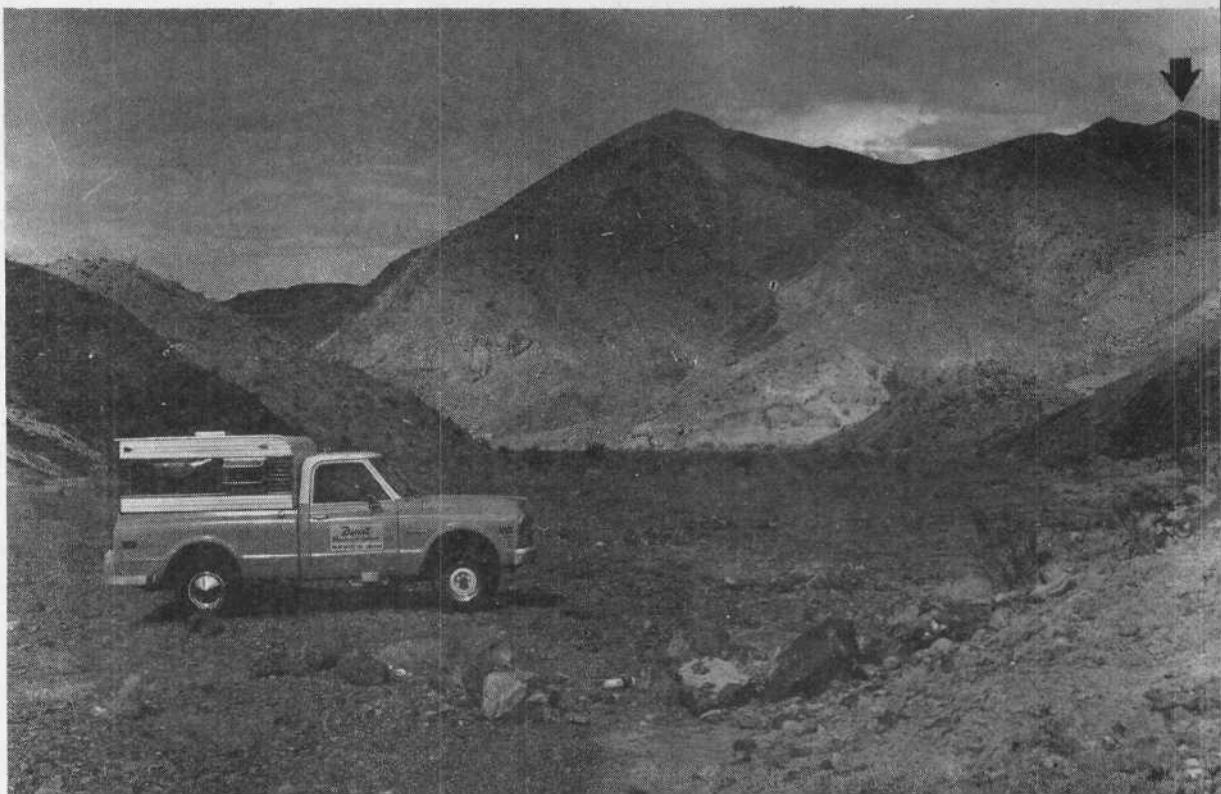
Owlshhead Mts.

by MARY FRANCES
STRONG

photos
by Jerry Strong

Sagenite provides a sheltered, almost level camping area with "diggings" on both sides.

The arrow [top right] indicates diggings where golden and lavender sagenite plus nodules and geodes have been found.



indicate small but varying amounts of iron and manganese were probably present in the original gel.

Sagenite Canyon has a picturesque setting and provides some fairly level campsites. Several diggings will be seen on both sides of the canyon—within easy walking distance. You will need a pick, bar and shovel for collecting.

The most sought after material occurs at the top of a peak where golden and lavender sagenite may be dug. The latter is not plentiful—in fact, almost rare. Some nice agate nodules and geodes are also to be found. Again, it is hardrock mining after a "stretch of the legs." Take along your lunch and water. Even enthusiastic diggers are not anxious to make the climb twice in one day.

The trail is hard to see as only upper sections of it, in the darker areas, are visible from the road. A short distance north of a white highway marker (see map), hike east and follow the ravine up to where the trail is distinguishable on the slopes. Numerous diggings will be encountered near the top and around on the opposite side. You can start your own or clean out an old diggings to find the "goodies" someone left behind.

Sagenite Canyon is well off the beaten path and does not make a good weekend trip. You will need at least two full days for collecting—preferably more—if you really want to obtain choice material. Success comes by getting acquainted with the sites and several days of digging.

Approaching from the south, Baker, at the junction of Interstate 15 and Highway 127, is the last chance for gasoline and supplies. From the north, Shoshone would be the last fillup and supply point. Be sure to have ample water along and be prepared for hot or cold weather. We have been there in November when temperatures soared to 90 degrees—while a subsequent Thanksgiving presented us with almost freezing temps, in company with strong winds.

From Baker, California, drive north on Highway 127 approximately 30 miles to Saratoga Springs Road. It joins the highway on the left (west), is signed and

In Sagenite Canyon, Jerry Strong attacks one of the diggings and collected a few small, but colorful specimens.





Little remains at the New Deal Manganese Mine near Owl Hole Spring except this sturdy dugout and numerous dumps.

a historical monument aids as a marker. Turn left and follow the graded, wash-board road northwesterly.

Six miles west of the highway, you will pass a side road leading to Saratoga Springs—one of the desert's important historical waterholes. Snuggled against the black and green Ibex Hills, the springs have formed a lake and marsh habitat which supports migratory waterfowl and a surprising number of other

birds. Until a few years ago, Saratoga Springs was a welcome haven for travelers heading into Death Valley from the south. A small, unimproved campground provided an overnight resting area.

People came to see the springs and wildlife. They marveled at the height, breadth and beauty of a stand of Athel trees. Just one of their spreading branches could have easily shaded a small house. Desert lovers enjoyed this

At the top of the steep hill, Gerald Backus contemplates where to dig. He chose wisely and found some beautiful sagenite agate. This was during the author's first trip in 1953. Photo by Mary Frances Strong.



oasis and seemed to almost revere the site. They came—absorbed the peace and beauty—then left, generally leaving only their tire tracks behind.

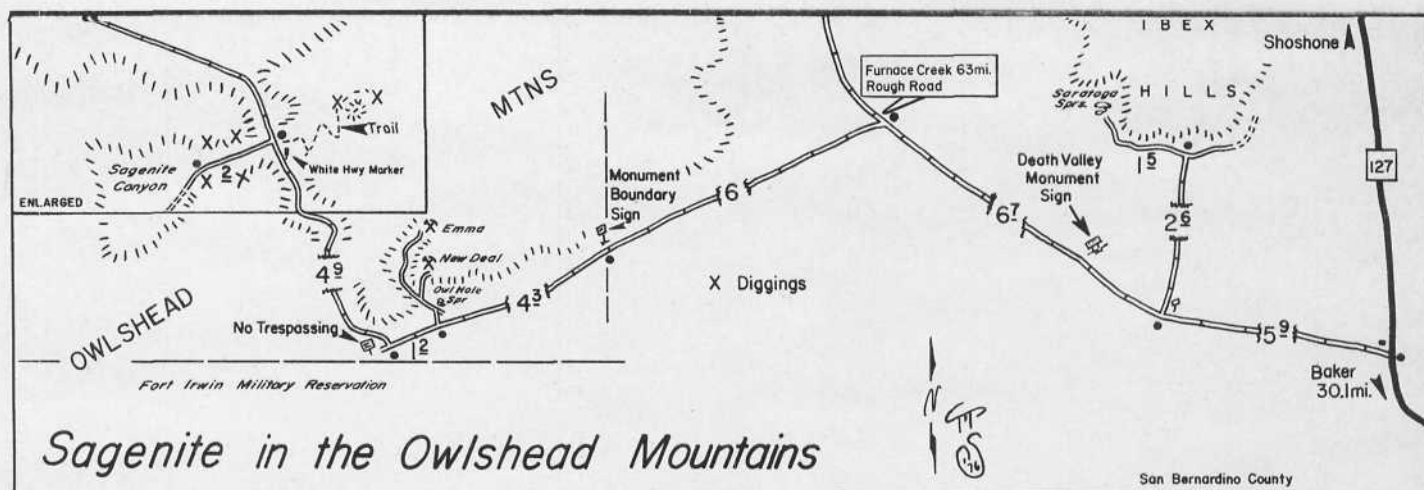
In the fall of 1973, several of our readers wrote to tell me these old and glorious trees, and the habitat they provided, had been destroyed—but not by vandalism. Camping was now prohibited. It seems "the powers that be" decided these great trees and the people who loved the area were threatening a pristine environment. There were rare pupfish in one of the springs. People might—after hundreds of years, finally cause their demise. The trees which had protected the area might now become their enemies. I cannot rationalize, much less accept, the reasons given for destroying Nature's beauty and sacrificing a wildlife habitat which had lived in harmony with the pupfish for two centuries.

Saratoga Springs has been a refuge for man since prehistoric time. Nearby petroglyphs indicate use by Indians long before the coming of white men. It served the earliest explorers, as well as the emigrants who later followed the Salt Lake Trail. Prospectors, too, found the springs a refreshing stop enroute to or from mining camps in the Death Valley-Tecopa region.

Continuing northwesterly, the road enters Death Valley National Monument and reaches a road junction in another 5.3 miles of travel. Two signs on the right proclaim "Rough Road"—"Furnace Creek, 63 miles." Keep left. You will now be traveling along one of the early routes which connected Death Valley with Searles Valley and mining areas in the Western Mojave Desert. Unfortunately, a large section of the old road is now within military reservations and cannot be explored.

A little over 10 miles from the Road Y lies Owl Hole Spring and the former mill site of the New Deal Mine. Known on the early road as "Owl Holes," water seeps from alluvium in Owl Hole Wash and "ponds up" in two elongated, saucer-like basins. During mining days, a well was dug to provide a larger amount of water for mill use. Dikes have been built to protect the spring from being buried by flash-floods. Tamarisks line the sides of the ponds and form a little oasis in a harsh, almost barren land.

The New Deal Manganese Mine lies idle now, but was once the largest pro-



Sagenite in the Owenshead Mountains

ducer in San Bernardino County. First tonnage was mined during World War I. The second World War again made manganese in great demand and a 35-ton mill was erected near the spring. Ore was broken to minus 3/8 inches by jaw-crusher and rollers. It was then ground to 48 mesh in a rod mill, concentrated on four tables, then sintered to a grade of 50 percent manganese. The ore was hauled to Riggs Siding on the now abandoned Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad—45 miles southeast.

The mine is a mile and a half north-

west of the spring and has been idle since 1950. All equipment and buildings have been removed. Only numerous dumps, pits and adits, plus one well-built dugout remain. At the springs, the mill's piers and a few cement foundations are the remnants of former busy mining days.

From Owl Hole Spring, continue southwesterly about a mile where a sign states "Fort Irwin Road, No Trespassing, etc." Keep right and follow the graded road 4.9 miles. At this point, you will be in a deep canyon and dirt tracks

leading into Sagenite Canyon should be on your left. Turn left and select a good campsite.

Sagenite Canyon has lost its isolation. No longer is it for four-wheel-drive only. Heavy thundershowers can deteriorate the road so always proceed with caution. November through April are the most pleasant months for collecting. Allow yourself ample time to explore and get acquainted with the locale. A well-planned attack on your objective will bring a reward of beautiful sagenite from the Owenshead Mountains. □



High Sierra's Mt. Whitney elevation: 14,495 ft.

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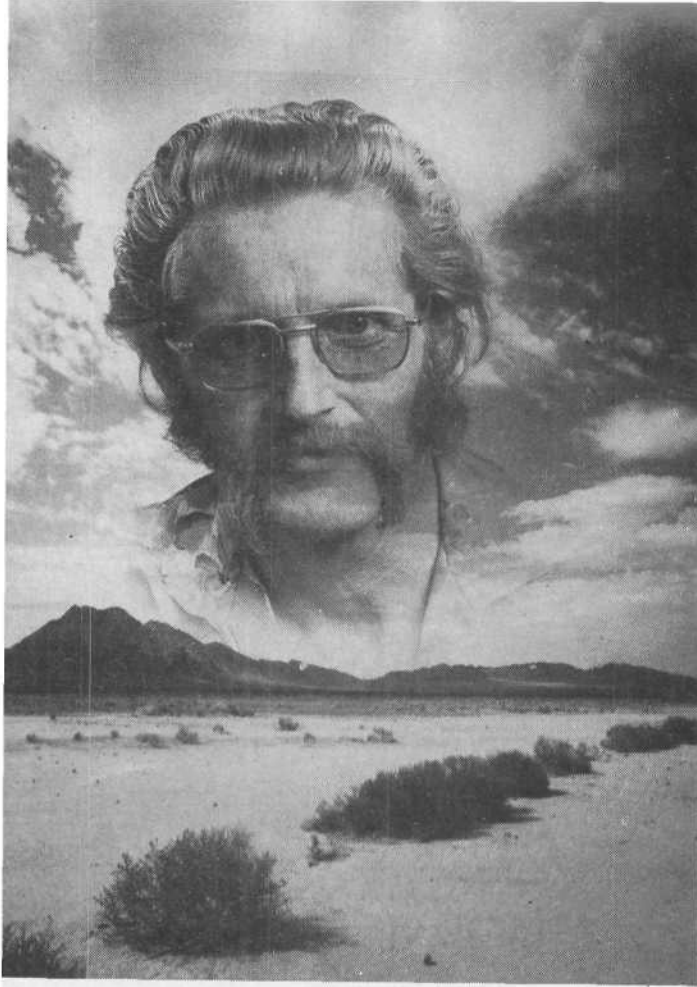
You'll be glad you did.

Death Valley's Badwater elevation: -284 ft.

Lone Pine



Roy Purcell

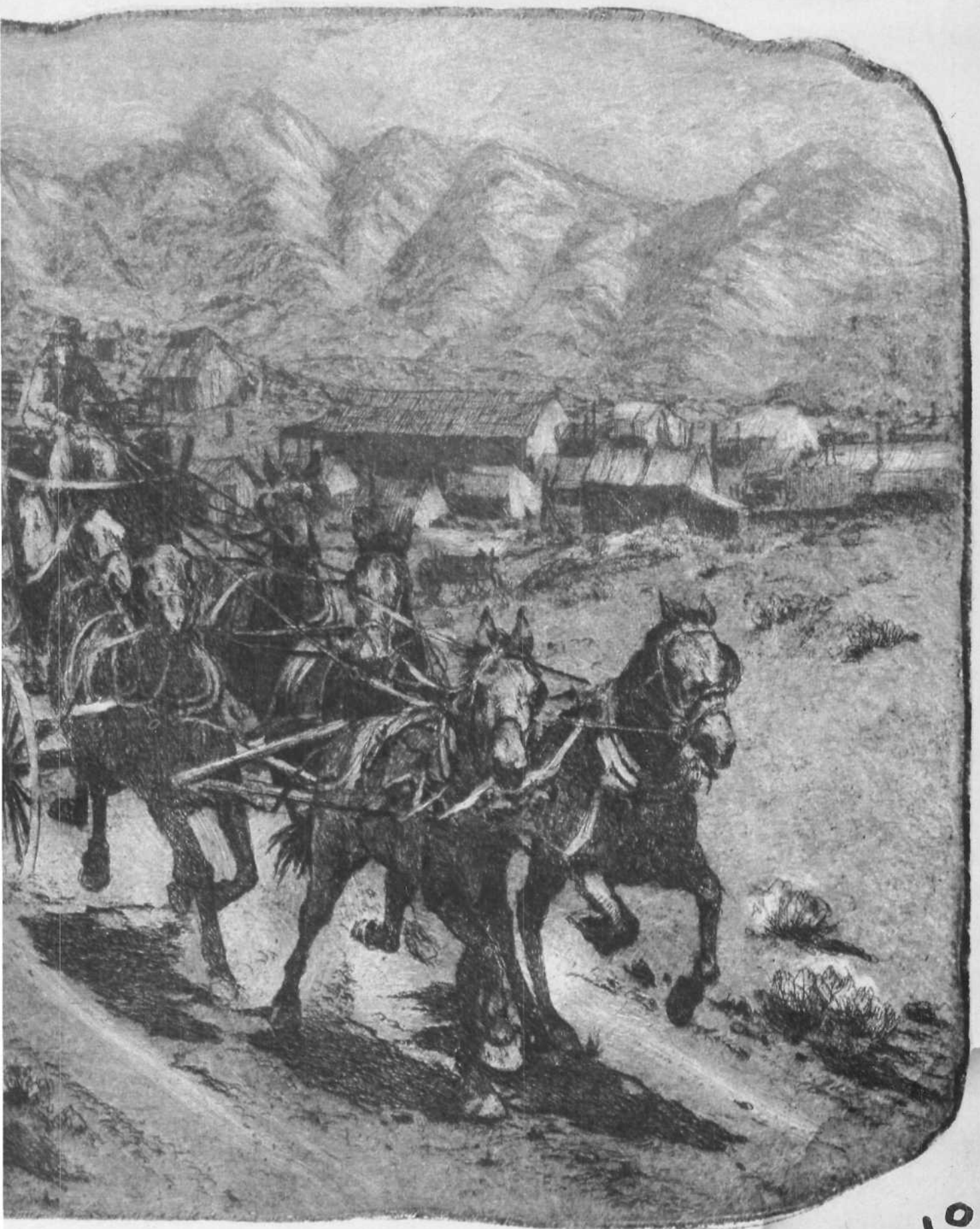


PURCELL Desert Wayfarer

by CHILL WILLS

HELLO, COUSINS. A lot of seasons have come and gone since I first drifted West from my native Texas, itchin' to get my feet wet in the picture business. During that time, the Man Upstairs has been mighty good to me, dealin' me good hands and lettin' me win my share of the pots in this ol' game of Life while settin' in with the best of company. Yessir, time and time again I've had the good fortune to work with great directors, writers, actors and other artists as they put their stamp

"Goldfield Stage" etching, 12"x9" [actual size].



350



It'd work. Everytime! Yessir, this ol' life's been good to me.

But, I'm not comin' outta the chute this time to jaw about the picture business. No sir! Instead, I wanta let all my *Desert Magazine* Cousins know about an artist feller I met a while back whose pictures and poems of the desert and the ol' West are second to none! I'm talking 'bout Roy Purcell, Cousins, and be shore and remember that name, 'cause the work he's already turned out makes him a lead-pipe cinch to take his rightful place along such greats as Mr. Russell, Mr. Remington and other Tall-in-the-saddle artists who have painted the deserts and areas of the American West! Of course, I realize that 'long 'bout now some o' you are sayin', "Hey, Chill! That's pretty tall company!" Well sir, I agree with you, but jist wait 'til you meet up with some o' Roy Purcell's etchings, drawin's, poems and watercolors. Then you'll understand why I feel the way I do about the man's work.

When word drifted back to Purcell how much I "pleasured" over the pieces o' his art that I had collected, he sent me an invite to come and "howdy" with him at his homespread. I "cottoned" to the idee and when my chores in the movie I was doin' eased up, I headed his way. I was curious 'bout Roy Purcell. What kind o' hombre was he in real life, this feller who was doin' such a good job o' slappin' his brand on original western art at such an early age? Suddenly we were arrivin' at Purcell's home-place and Purcell himself was rushin' out to

on such efforts, as "The Alamo," "Giant," "Tulsa," "The Over-The-Hill-Gang" and others that you Cousins supported with your hard-earned dollars. For that I'm mighty thankful.

And some of my director compadres have been nice enough to give me credit for brightenin' up some of their scripts

through the years with what they laugh and call my "Chillisms." But I don't wanta take too much credit for fer that. 'Cause somehow, when my dialogue bogged down or got too talky and muddled up, I'd jist stop, scratch my head, and ad lib some good ol' Texas Horse Sense. And you know somethin'?



Above:
"On the Mormon Trail"
etching,
10"x10".

Left:
"Over the Hill"
etching,
6 3/4"x11".

Right:
"The
Old
Miller
Place"
etching,
14"x24".



give us a welcome that'd have done credits to the folks back home!

Red-headed, with a "plentiful" of freckles dottin' his grinnin' face (remindin' me of an ol' boy back home that got a bucket-full o' bran kicked in his face one cold winter mornin' when he was milkin' an ol' cow and grabbed her milk-faucets with a pair o' cold hands) Roy stands 'bout six-two and would "dress-out" close to 170 on a good day. Soft-spoken, polite of speech and manner, he shows that his folks knew how to "bring him up right." Real proud-like, he introduced us to his wife and four youngin's. It was plain that Roy Purcell is a "family man."

Roy Purcell's roots are deep—as a result his art is straight and true, givin' always a down-to-earth portrayal o' the desert and West he loves so well!

Purcell took me out to his studio and I watched and listened while he explained how he works—and first off I learned that he works backward; but I'll explain all that later.

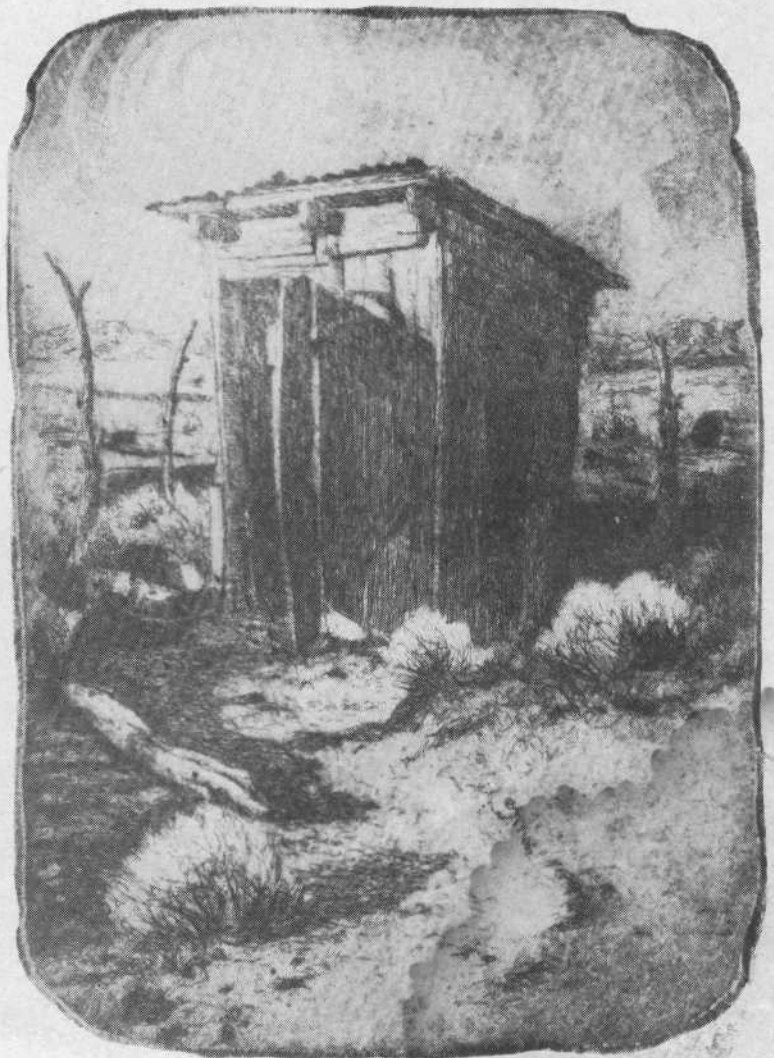
Generally he etches on plates o' copper-alloy, which he coats with asphalt to make a better workin' background. Then, usin' one o' his wife's sewing needles stuck in a stick (like a pen-point in a pen-holder) he looks at the pictures he has selected and starts scratchin' (drawin') on the plate. When the drawin' is all done he puts the plate in a solution to remove the asphalt. Next step, he dips the plate in a special acid which eats into every scratch he has made, diggin' it

deeper so that the plate will give a sharper impression when printed.

He soaks the paper used in his etchin's in water before printin'. This is

a very heavy and expensive 100% rag-paper that will last for generations as long as it is not mistreated or backed

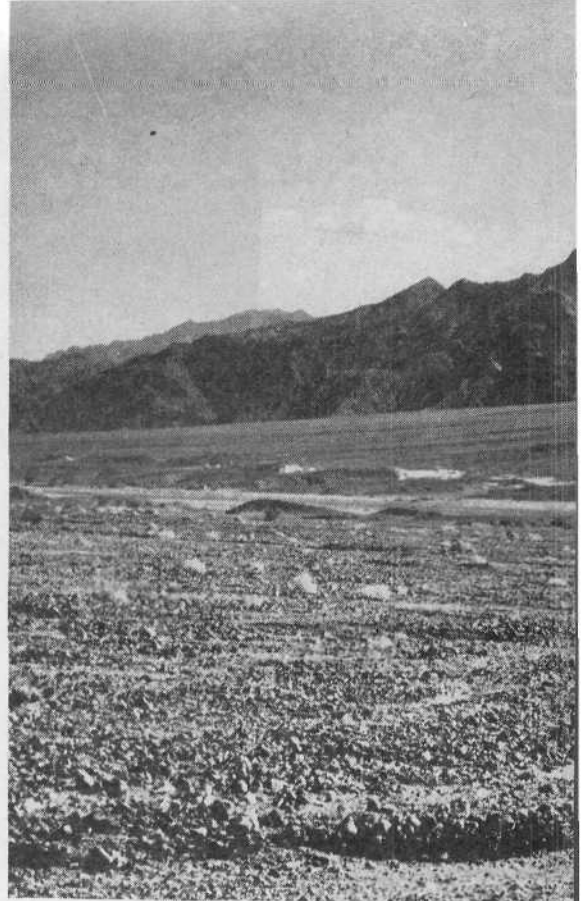
Continued on Page 46



Right:
"The
Reading
Room"
etching,
5"x7".

Death Valley's Boldest '49er

by HAROLD O. WEIGHT



BILL ROOD was one of the lost emigrants of 1849 who trapped themselves in Death Valley and gave the place its sinister name and reputation. But Bill is the only one among them known to have left a record of his presence there.

Little physical evidence of the passage of the Fortyniners ever existed in Death Valley. Ashes of vanished campfires.

Bones of slaughtered oxen. Goods and family treasures scattered and broken. Deep-cut wheel ruts in the salt and alkali. And the wrecks of abandoned wagons, pinpointing key encampments. That is about all.

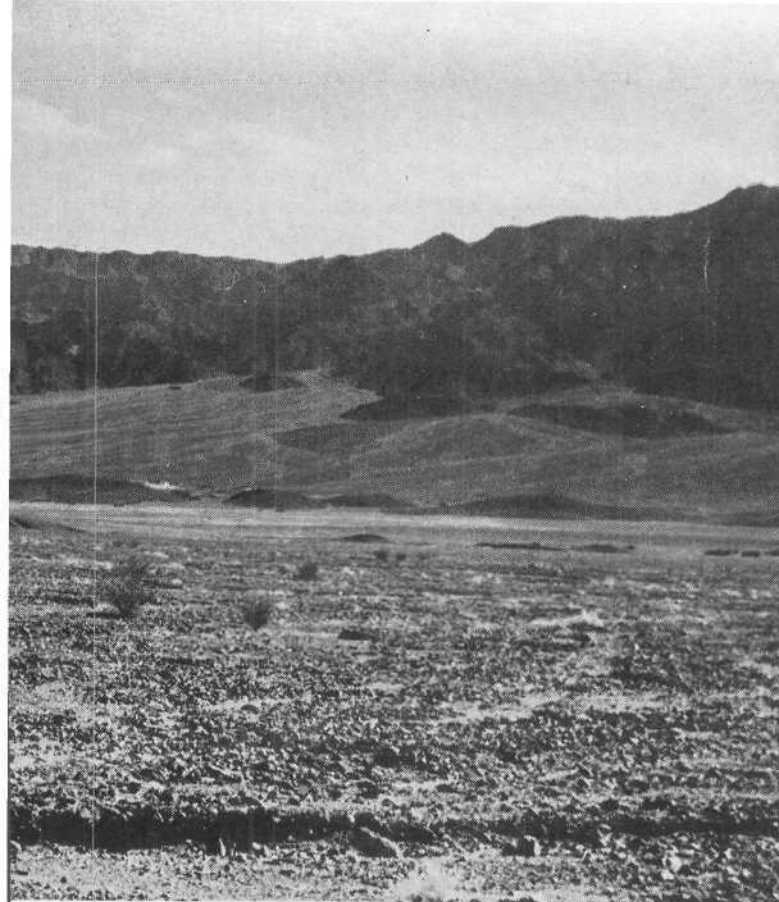
Except for Bill Rood's rocks.

The general mood of the emigrants, when the necessity for abandoning their wagons became clear, is remembered as

one of prayer, despair, and the hoarding of remaining strength for an almost hopeless ordeal ahead. But at that very time, Bill was expending considerable energy and time in carving name and date on a big boulder on the bajada between the Panamint and Cottonwood mountains: "W. B. Rood 1849." He also managed, somehow, sometime, to scratch "W. B. R. 1849" on another rock



Rood's name and date, deeply grooved into a large boulder on the Cottonwood Mountains bajada. Rood is the only Fortyniner known to have left his name in the Valley.



Looking from Boundary Canyon fan across at the Panamint Mountains. Salt Creek runs through light area near center of picture, and this is the route supposedly followed by the Jayhawker group of the Death Valley Fortyniners.

at Jayhawker Spring, west of Emigrant Canyon.

Rood seems to have taken Death Valley in his stride. But then, from the events of his life, Bill took everything in stride. He faced and overcame dangers of the plains and the ordeal of Death Valley. He won and lost in the Mother Lode. Pre-Civil War adventures led him into Sonora and to ranching and Indian fight-

ing in Arizona's wild, lower Santa Cruz Valley after the Gadsden Purchase. Single-handed against a hundred Apaches, he survived a battle that is Arizona folklore, and was called brave by those who sought to kill him.

He owned the largest orchards and vineyards in Tucson when the Confederates took that city, and probably lost them in the turmoil that followed Union

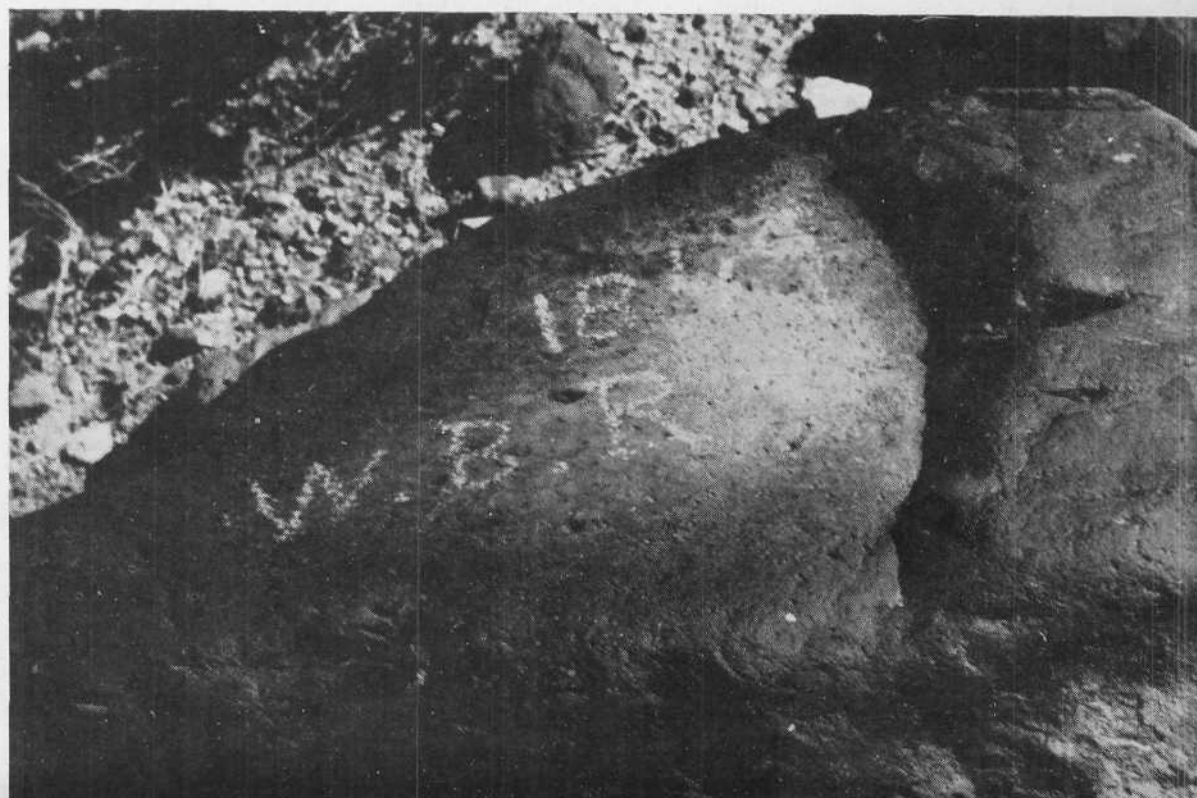
recapture. In the La Paz gold rush days of the 1860s, he established and operated a great cattle ranch—Rancho de los Yumas—which extended 16 miles along the Colorado River between the gold fields and Yuma. It was in that river that he lost his life.

William B. Rood was born in 1819—the U.S. Census of 1860 says in Kentucky, that of 1864 says Tennessee. He lived near Knoxville, Illinois, when the Gold Rush began. He was a member of a large company of young unmarried men who left the Knoxville-Galesburg area for California on April 1, 1849.

Bill shared a wagon with Edward Doty and Bruin Byram. Others from Knoxville were Asa Haynes, Thomas McGrew, George Allen, Alexander Palmer, Thomas Shannon, Aaron Larkin, John Plummer, John West and William Robinson. From Galesburg and elsewhere in Illinois came John B. Colton, Sidney Edgerton, Marshall Edgerton, John Cole, Alonzo Clay, Luther Richards, Harrison Frans, John Groscup, Urban Davidson, Charles Clarke and Edward Bartholomew.

All these are on the rollcall of the Death Valley Fortyniners. They were Jayhawkers—members of the largest organized company of emigrants to enter Death Valley.

In unknown country, the Jayhawkers sent scouts out ahead. Rood's wagon-



Rood's initials near Jayhawker Spring led to an official revision of the route of Jayhawkers through the Panamint Mountains. [The inscription is not chalked.]



Looking across Emigrant wash from the bajada where Rood inscribed his name and "1849." The mouth of Emigrant Canyon shows clearly, upper center. Panamint Mountains in background.

mates were scouts, and Bill's nature and abilities make it almost inevitable that he was too. These scouts guided the Jayhawker wagons, by smoke signals, to their first Death Valley camp, at Traver-tine Springs, near the mouth of Furnace Creek Canyon. Jayhawker Sheldon Young, in his terse log, gives the date as December 22, 1849.

On December 24, the Jayhawkers attempted a direct crossing of Death Valley with their wagons. Marshes and salt beds turned them back to the eastern side. Continuing northwest, they first reached Salt Creek and then Salt Spring, now known as Jayhawker Well. Here, about seven air miles due east of present Stovepipe Wells Village, they camped on December 26. There was grass and water—of a sort.

From Salt Spring the scouts went out again, seeking a route wagons could follow. None was found. December 30—again by Young's log—the Jayhawkers and those who traveled with them packed what they could carry, abandon-

ed their wagons, and started their epic walk out of the desert.

That desperate journey, from Death Valley to Rancho San Francisquito, near present Newhall, took more than a month. Rood traveled with his Knoxville and Galesburg friends, with Ed Doty as their leader, and he was one of the few who did not discard their guns as too heavy to carry. With Doty and Thomas Shannon, he hunted along their route for food for the starving emigrants. The deer, wild horses and cattle the three killed in the last days of the trek may well have kept some of their comrades alive.

Rood's inscription on the Cottonwood mountains bajada is a long way from any escape route historians have plotted for the Jayhawkers. On that final exodus, loaded with all he could carry, he would

Huge boulder near Jayhawker Spring, on which a number of early Death Valley visitors cut their names, initials and dates.

hardly have wandered that far in quest of some special rock autograph. Logically he must have cut his name there while on a scout out from Salt Spring, probably when an overnight camp offered free time.

This inscription has been known since the early 1880s, and was accepted simply as evidence Bill Rood had been there. But when the rock inscribed "W. B. R. 1849" was discovered in 1936, it altered Death Valley history. That summer Indian Tom Wilson guided "Rocky" Cochran and Farland Wells, from Wild-rose Conservation Camp, to a tiny seep in a small canyon west of Emigrant Canyon. On boulders near the spring they discovered Indian petroglyphs and the names, initials and dates of some early Death Valley visitors. Most were of members of Darwin French's 1860 Lost Gunsight mine expedition. But there also was Jayhawker Rood.

A few days later the inscriptions were photographed and studied by Death Valley National Monument Superintendent T. Ray Goodwin and Naturalist Donald Curry. Soon the seep became "Jayhawker Spring" and the canyon "Jayhawker Canyon."

For many years the route of the Jayhawkers out of Death Valley had been generally agreed upon: From Salt Spring to a dry camp near present Stovepipe Wells Village, then up Emigrant Wash and Emigrant Canyon to Harrisburg Flats, at the head of Emigrant. Here the second night's dry camp was made—where a snow fall furnished abundant



water. From the flats, the supposed route was through Emigrant Pass and down lower Wildrose Canyon to Panamint Valley.

Now Rood's initials suddenly became the "long-sought proof" that the emigrants actually had followed narrow Jayhawker Canyon instead of Emigrant. To reconcile the new route with reliable testimony that the second night's camp had been on Harrisburg Flats, it was deduced the Jayhawkers had gone up-canyon from Jayhawker Spring, crossed a ridge, descended into Emigrant Canyon, then followed it up to the summit.

Why had weary travelers taken this longer, roundabout, more difficult course instead of going directly up Emigrant Canyon? Answer: From the slope the Jayhawkers were climbing out of Death Valley, the mouth of Emigrant was "blind and well-nigh undiscoverable." They simply had missed it!

I once subscribed to the revised Jayhawker route, supposing its premises had been tested. But after years of tracing out Bill Rood's wanderings, visiting his inscribed rocks, and finally hiking (and scrambling) that stretch between upper Jayhawker and upper Emigrant canyons, it became obvious they had not.

The whole Jayhawker Canyon thesis really rests on unreasonable assumptions, the most fantastic being that those experienced Jayhawker scouts—although knowing their own lives might depend on it—did no scouting at all while the main body waited trustingly at Salt Springs. They failed to find Emi-

grant Canyon, which has been a main thoroughfare through the Panamints from Indian trail to paved highway. They failed to discover that Jayhawker Canyon led nowhere. They failed to find that the main wash into which both Emigrant and Jayhawker drain would take them up to Towne Pass—the other highway route through the Panamints.

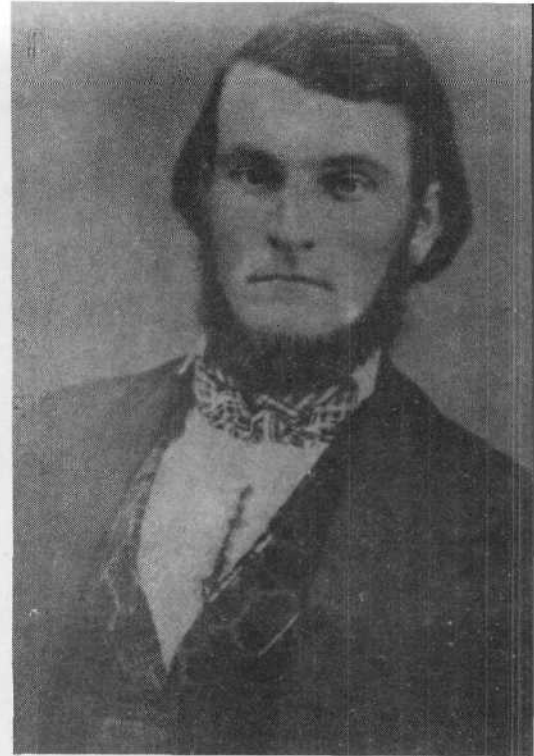
And it assumes that although scouts went out ahead when the Jayhawkers traveled through difficult country—both before and after Death Valley—in leaving the Valley the emigrants trusted to luck, blindly entering a narrow, unknown side canyon on the chance it might lead them somewhere.

We know the scouts went out from Salt Spring, and that Rood went at least as far as his inscribed rock on the bajada—and that is as distant as the mouths of Emigrant and Jayhawker canyons. And I can testify that from Rood's rock the entrance to that "well-nigh undiscoverable" Emigrant Canyon—with its white outwash of flood-carried debris—is clearly and unmistakably visible. Rood had to know a canyon was there.

If the Fortyniners chose Jayhawker Canyon for any reason, it was a sorry choice. Beyond Jayhawker Spring, where the canyon narrows and becomes a gulch, you can indeed climb a low ridge and look down into Emigrant Canyon. A long, steep way down. I followed a wild burro trail down that angle-of-repose slope, and found that even those sure-footed mountaineers had worked a switchback into the steepest pitch. Slipping and sliding to the bottom, it was difficult to picture exhausted emigrants and their half-dead oxen descending without accident.

The case for this route would be much stronger if, as some Death Valley writers have declared, there are names, initials and dates of other Fortyniners on the rocks at Jayhawker Spring. But no researcher has identified any, and I found none. Among the inscriptions of later visitors, Rood's dated and initialed rock stand alone—proof not of a Jayhawker travel route, but only that Bill Rood once was there, possibly scouting and alone.

Few Fortyniners after their escape ever came back to Death Valley. Rood, urged by W. W. McCoy, returned in 1869 in quest of lost silver that emigrants crossing the Panamints in 1849 had found. McCoy, noted early San Bernar-



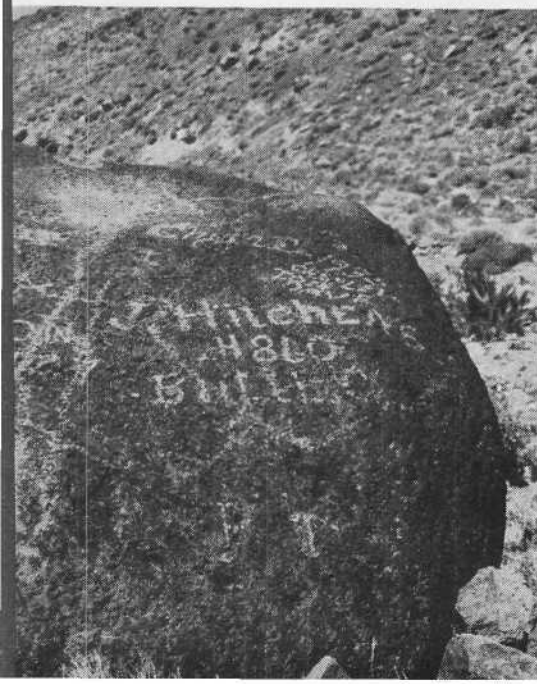
William B. Rood, Death Valley Fortyniner, who left his name and initials in Death Valley in 1849. Portrait taken after he had been several years in the West. Photo courtesy Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

dino, California, prospector and lost mine hunter, came upon Rood in Hermosillo, Sonora, in 1858. Rood, he said, was broke and hungry after a \$3000 good-time spree. McCoy came to the rescue. They may have discussed the Lost Gun-sight silver then, but it was not until 1863 that McCoy came to Rancho de los Yumas to induce Bill to go with him to Death Valley.

Rood was willing, but deeply involved in his rancho, a meat market in La Paz, and other activities. Not until 1869 did he arrive in San Bernardino—to find McCoy committed to a freighting contract. McCoy drafted his brother-in-law, George Miller, as a substitute—a fortunate choice for us. Miller authored a detailed account of the expedition which was published in the 1919 Annual of the Historical Society of Southern California.

Leaving San Bernardino in April with horses and pack train, Rood, Miller, Eugene Lander and Paul Van Curen went from Granite Spring through the Slate Range, up Panamint Valley and then up Wildrose Canyon to Emigrant Pass and what Rood called Summit Camp. This, he told Miller, was the second camp made by the emigrants after leaving Salt Spring, and the last

Continued on Page 38



Eleodes Armata

alias

**Pinacate Bug,
Circus Beetle,
Stink Bug,
Lucky Beetle**

by K. L. BOYNTON

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ONE OF the most unlikely of all characters to be dwelling in the desert is *Eleodes*, the big, black beetle. Yet, there he is, trudging about the scenery and making a very good living indeed.

His very color is a drawback, since black absorbs heat. To make matters worse, he is flightless. Unable to zoom off to cooler areas, he is, in fact, grounded permanently. This is a bad situation to be in since when the sun hammers down and the ground flings it back upward, the surface of a desert is the very hottest spot of all. Nor is black the color to wear in a desert for safety reasons, since it makes him stand out against his light background, easy for would-be predators to see. And what about the grocery possibilities for a beetle in this dry and sandy world? How this fellow gets along so well is one of the most interesting of desert success stories, and it is coming to light now thanks to many an hour spent in hard, hot work by scientists beetling about the desert in pursuit of this one.

Structurally, *Eleodes* belongs to the darkling beetle family, a group so called because of their love of darkness. And *Eleodes* does love darkness. Only, he also loves broad daylight and bright sun, which is not according to darkling beetle rules. Besides being a darkling beetle of sorts, *Eleodes* is also known as the pinacate (pin-ah-cah-te) bug, from a good old Spanish word derived from his habit upon occasion of elevating his rear end to an apex. He is also known as the circus beetle for the same reason, since in elevating his posterior thus, he is, in fact, standing on his head. He is likewise known as a stink bug. This term is in further development of the same reason since, when standing on his head and elevating his posterior to the apex, he is fixing to let loose with a very, very smelly spray, aimed with surprising accuracy at what he considers a troublesome nuisance.

Lastly, he is called the lucky beetle by certain Indians (whose mythology tells them that in making his headstand he's listening to the gods who live deep in the earth) and ditto by old time doughty prospectors who, regarding the beetle poised thus, are convinced he's pointing to a mother lode. Many a desert camper, sitting by his fire at night, is pleased to go along with this good luck bit when this big beetle comes lumbering in out of



Above: This head-standing performance by the Circus Beetle is not for applause and is guaranteed to clear the arena.

Photo by Richard L. Cassell.

Right: A pair of darkling beetles attack a dainty morsel. Photo by J. B. Freeman

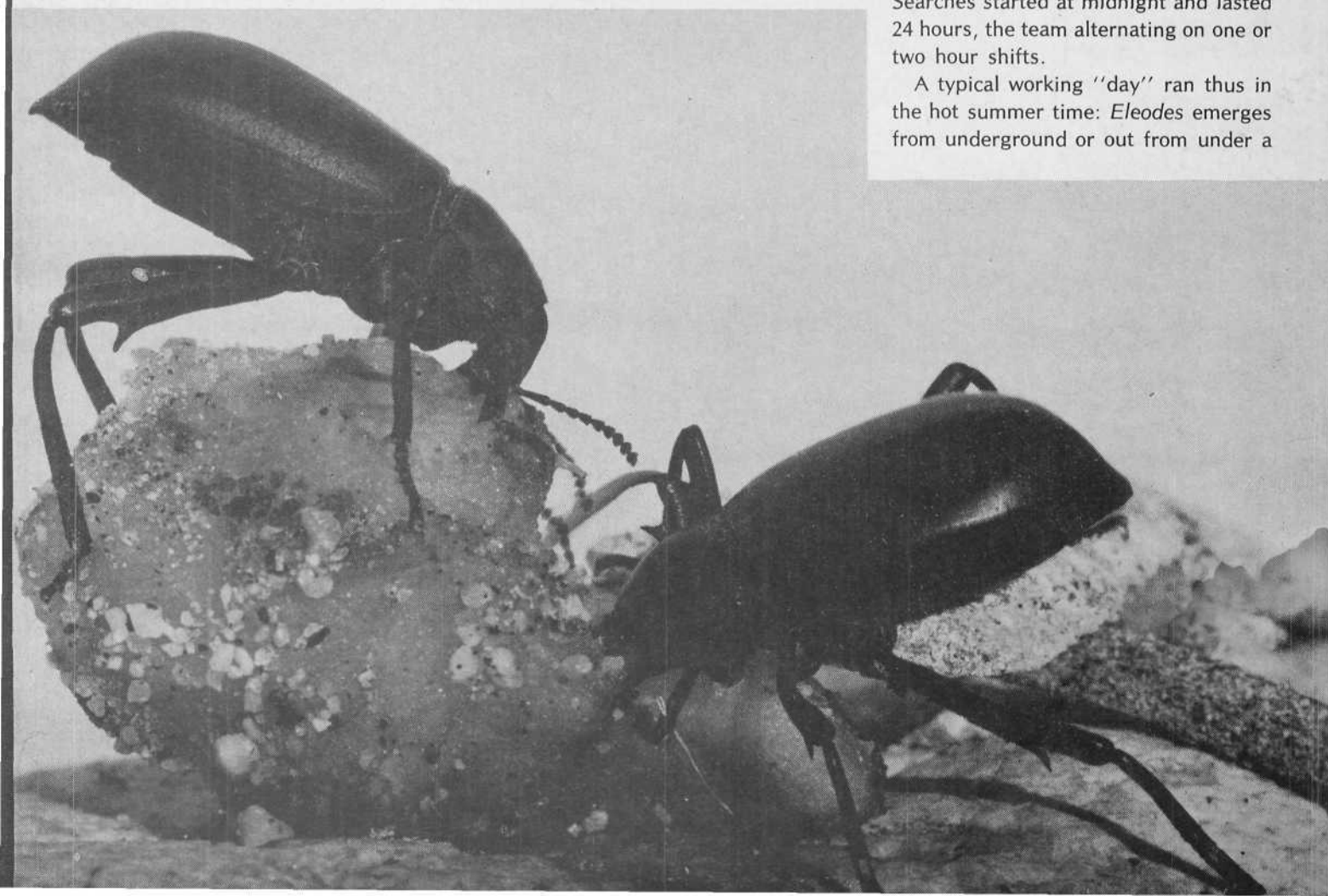


the darkness. Under such conditions, a handout is definitely in order.

Eleodes isn't particular about his food. He's a vegetarian, a scavenger, a diner of what's around, and therein is a measure of his tribe's success. One was seen feeding on some dead Mormon tea and a sardine accidentally dropped by an inquiring scientist, the beetle shuttling back and forth between these two viands some four times before shuffling along to other offerings on the menu.

The team of R. A. Kramm and K. R. Kramm picked Joshua Tree National Monument in California as a fine spot for their *Eleodes* sleuthing. Here the beetle was bound to encounter daily and seasonal temperature extremes and generally tough living conditions and could be expected to demonstrate its survival skill. They traipsed around after selected beetles by day and, finding that the beetles were insensitive to red light, they watched them in the field with a red flashlight at night. A dot of white paint on the back of each beetle made them easier to see. Beetle-active areas were laid out on a grid system and the path each one took plotted on graph paper. Searches started at midnight and lasted 24 hours, the team alternating on one or two hour shifts.

A typical working "day" ran thus in the hot summer time: *Eleodes* emerges from underground or out from under a



rock or out of a crevice at the bouncing hour of 5 A.M., moving out into an open area between shrubs. For the next three hours he's a busy bug, beetling around for something to eat in the full sunlight. Along about 8 A.M., the temperature begins to get high, and *Eleodes* moves into the shade. When the ground begins to get too hot also, he climbs up into tall grasses or shrubs. Here the temperature is lower, and the wind velocity provides a cooling breeze. Off the ground in the shade of a bush limb or leaves is a pleasant place to spend the desert afternoon. Along about 5 P.M., when the air temperature decreased, *Eleodes* climbs down and moves into the open spaces, once more dining on snacks encountered on the way. By 8 P.M. or 9 P.M., the desert temperature has decreased to the point where the beetle may retire underground to be inactive until next morning at 5 A.M. when his alarm clock rings again.

When the beetles are abroad in the sandy washes or around parts of a bush or rock surfaces, about 60 percent of the time is spent feeding. The working beetle, trudging around looking for food, has no particular direction in mind, apparently. One followed from approximately 7:30 A.M. to 7:30 P.M. mooched around in some needlegrass and a little buckwheat, then into Mormon tea, then into buckwheat, more Mormon tea and ended up in another patch of buckwheat.

His course was a meandering one with a couple of back loops and crisscrosses. As for the distance traveled, seven beetles followed in turn produced some interesting figures: mean distance walked per hour during movement periods about 19 feet; greatest distance hiked by one about 64 feet.

Ratewise, the Kramms found, the beetles sloughed along mostly, quickening their pace in the open spaces between bushes, but still working in surprising heat. When they hit a red hot sandy spot (122 F. degrees), they stood tall on their six legs, raising their bodies up a good centimeter off the surface, and ran to shade. Best working temperature conditions seemed to be when the day was between 53.6 and 82.4 degrees, with most activity occurring in full sunlight. Season wise, they were most active on the surface at Joshua in July. None were seen in November or December. Generally speaking, in the spring they are most diurnal, in summer more crepuscular or nocturnal, in winter they hibernate.

The population peaks first in the spring with the emergence of overwintering adults when many are abroad on the face of the desert, and then again in midsummer after the rains when the new generation of adults show up. *Eleodes* rejoices in very large populations as indicated at Joshua where of 192 beetles marked, only 18 were ever recaptured. They do not seem to have any territorial

ideas. An individual does not have any particular home. Any old hole or crack or crevice is fine as long as it is deep enough to provide the correct seasonal temperature.

Kramm and Kramm, also interested to see possible differences that might exist between two different species of *Eleodes*, tested them in the lab in a doughnut-shaped affair with a sand bottom. The doughnut was heated on one side by a stove and cooled with salted ice on the other. The heated area was marked with a temperature measuring device every 20 cm. The released beetles tramped back and forth around the doughnut and finally came to rest on preferred temperature spots. Interestingly enough, the two different species had two different preferences, one being a couple of degrees warmer than the other.

In the field, the beetles are often out in very high radiation and high temperatures. Certainly the trick of raising themselves off the ground helps and the fact that they quite sensibly retire to the shade or even underground to cool off. Something else might have an effect: while it is true that *Eleodes* was short-changed when flying wings were handed out, maybe for his purposes he has something better. What would be his front pair have been modified, as in many other members of the *Coleoptera* group of insects, into horny covers. These are called elytra. *Eleodes'* elytras are very long and provide a hard-top shield the full length of his body. Under this crusty top is—of all things—a hollow air-filled space. And below this, the body proper. In a way, this space between the bug and his hard top covering is something like having on a modified suit of armor. Anatomists eye this subelytral space and wonder. It's there for a good reason. What?

On this knotty problem Biologist Neil Hadley's study throws some light. His area was a couple of miles southwest of Guadalupe, Arizona, a land of creosote bush, saguaro and paloverde with sandy soil. A very hot area, very dry. A better spot for finding out everything *Eleodes* has going for him couldn't have been picked.

Hadley didn't leave a thing undone. He measured the air and soil temperatures, the relative humidity, the wind velocity, the radiation, and fed all this



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continuing information into a computer. He then attached a thermocouple to the beetles themselves either in the body cavity itself, or in the subelytral cavity. The thermocouples didn't bother the beetles. They walked, fed and generally behaved normally.

He had 11 of the *Eleodes armata* working for him and while they potted about their business on the desert surface their temperatures were recorded as the morning wore on and the heat and radiation increased. Surprisingly, in the early part of the test, the beetle's body temperature first rose well above that of the air, hitting about 104 degrees. Then, a balance seemed to be achieved between heat gain and heat loss. The beetle was able to hold this equilibrium within a few degrees for some time until at last the day's temperature and radiation loads got too high, forcing it to go to the shade or even underground.

Always the temperature in the subelytral space was higher than that of the body itself, in one case a full eight degrees. Once the beetle reached the cooler areas, both body and subelytral temperatures dropped fast.

Since black is a bad color in the desert for absorbing heat, Hadley painted some beetles white to see if this would be better. It did reflect the light and delay the temperature rise so that the differences between subelytral cavity and body cavity was not so great in these beetles. But, their black bellies still absorbed heat from the ground.

Obviously, the crusty shell provided by the elytra helps conserve water by preventing evaporation, a valuable adjunct to a desert going beetle. And, since one breathing apparatus of the insect opens into the subelytral space, it may be that ventilation of this area helps the beetle unload heat and to achieve temperature equilibrium under mild heat stress. Hadley, cogitating on all this, arrived at the conclusion that certainly if this cavity did not exist between the hard wing covers and the body underneath, the sun's heat would be quickly conducted to the inside body cavity. Nature seems to have separated the two with an air-filled pocket—a kind of buffer zone—which delays this heat transfer. With this neat added protection against heat build-ups, *Eleodes* can make his short jaunts across the hot desert sand in spite of his dark coloration.

So much for the handling of the color drawback in the matter of temperature regulation. Now how about the potential bad news of black beetle against light sand to be gobbled up so easily?

Here, too, *Eleodes* has the answer: The smell, the bad smell, contained in a strong and irritating secretion a-la skunko, fired with such accuracy that attackers learn to avoid him.

The team of anatomists Thomas Eisner and Jerrold Meinwald took a look at his machinery. The secretion is manufactured by glands which are actually foldings of the body wall. Such a gland consists of tissues that make the secretion and a sac-like reservoir in which the secretion is stored. The opening to the outside is small, located in *Eleodes* in the tip of his abdomen, and it has a valve closure. When action is called for, *Eleodes* stands on his head, points his abdomen. A muscle opens the valve and the secretion—a fancy chemical consisting of three quinones—is ejected as a spray.

A shot of this in the nose discourages a coyote, a fox and, in fact, almost all other predators great and small, foiling the attacker before the beetle sustains disabling injury. But the grasshopper mouse is not daunted. Tough and determined, the mouse grabs the beetle and, holding it upright in his front paws, jams the butt end down into the sand. The beetle fires away but the secretion goes into the earth. A toad, lightning-quick on the tongue flick, can capture and swallow an *Eleodes* before the beetle can fire. Belated measures, if they occur in the stomach, apparently do not bother the toad.

What with such efficient temperature regulating devices and defense tactics that work so well generally, *Eleodes* is pretty lucky in his own right, particularly since he has developed such a flexible activity pattern. For here is a beetle that can be active daytimes, dusk or night, hibernate and generally make the most of daily and seasonal environmental conditions. But this leaves the question: How does this lucky beetle know how to do all this? If his activity is run by an internal clock, and K. R. Kramm's tests with *Eleodes* on an activity wheel seem to point this way, how can a timer like this be switched around with such ease?

Beetle-browed scientists are still trying to find out. □

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Paquime, Cultural Crossroads of Chihuahua

MEXICO IS a country well known for its archeological treasures. Each year hundreds of thousands visit the impressive ruins of such pre-Columbian cities as Teotihuacan, Uxmal and Chichen Itza. All of these sites are in the southern part of the country. One of the most important archeological sites in the northern part of Mexico is within a few hours drive of the border. Yet curiously, it remains generally overlooked by most Mexico-bound tourists. This site is known as Paquime, or Casas Grandes. Both terms mean "large houses."

The ruins at Casas Grandes have been known for centuries. Sixteenth century

Spanish explorers mention the crumbling adobe walls in their writings. The Franciscan friars established a mission near the site in the late 1660s, which was subsequently destroyed in the Indian revolt of 1684. The first description written in English was by John Bartlett in 1854. In the 1880s, Paquime was visited by the archeologist A. F. Bandelier. A few years later, veteran explorer Carl Lumholtz visited the ruins, too.

It was not until the period of 1958-61, however, that any serious excavation and study was made of the site. This "dig" was jointly conducted by the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia y Historia

and the Amerind Foundation of Dragoon Arizona. Under the bi-national direction of Dr. Charles Di Peso and Professor Eduardo Contreras, Paquime began to reveal its long held secrets.

It appears that the Casas Grandes site had been used for centuries. Three major periods of occupation can be identified. Each of these three succeeding cultures shows more skill, diversification and sophistication. The people of Paquime seemed to have reached their peak of civilization in the 140-year period between 1060 and 1200 A.D. Then, like many of the pueblo communities of the Southwest, the complex was suddenly abandoned and its inhabitants moved on.

Paquime is an important site to archeologists because it was a melting pot of many cultures. At first glance, Paquime resembles many of the ancient Indian ruins found in Arizona, New Mexico and southwest Colorado. Upon closer examination, however, certain important differences emerge. The pottery produced by the Paquime peoples was very sophisticated and artistic, even by today's standards. The clay texture, manufacture and painted designs were far superior to anything found in the Southwest. These potters were true artisans.

Certain discoveries really blew the archeological minds of the excavators. Paquime was long thought to be a religious and ceremonial center. While the people here built pit houses or kivas like the Mogollon people farther north, they also adopted many cultural traits of the advanced cultures far to the south in Southern Mexico and Guatemala. There may even have been worship of the god Quetzalcoatl. There were stone ceremonial monuments and metal jewelry found which were typical of the famous Toltec

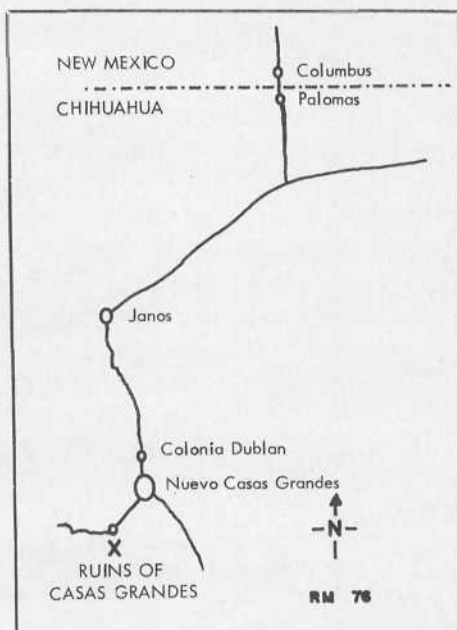
by
**ROGER
MITCHELL**

Paquime's parrot cages and a portion of the vast archeological ruins.



civilization. Two "I"-shaped ball courts were uncovered which are very similar to those found at Tula and Xochicalo in southern Mexico. The peoples of Paquime also kept domesticated parrots and turkeys, probably for their brightly colored feathers which were used for ceremonial purposes.

The most striking feature of the ruins is the buildings. Their construction was relatively simple, yet the architecture shows forethought and careful planning. The largest structures were communal buildings around which revolved the life of the community. Having walls four feet thick, the lowest floors could support the weight of as many as four more stories on top of them. The wall thickness tapers



down as each additional floor was added. Logs fitted together and plastered over formed the floors of the apartments. The walls were then sealed with a layer of smooth plaster.

Entrances to the main building complex were quite limited. The "T"-shaped defensive doorway was commonly used. By using this type of architecture, an intruder entering the door would have to crouch over in an awkward position coming in head first. He would thus be an easy target for anyone inside with a club. Further, access to the stairways leading to the upper floors were all inside the interior rooms and courts. Paquime certainly had a fortress-like quality.

The people who lived here were equally skilled in hydrology. A four-mile-long aqueduct brought fresh water to the city

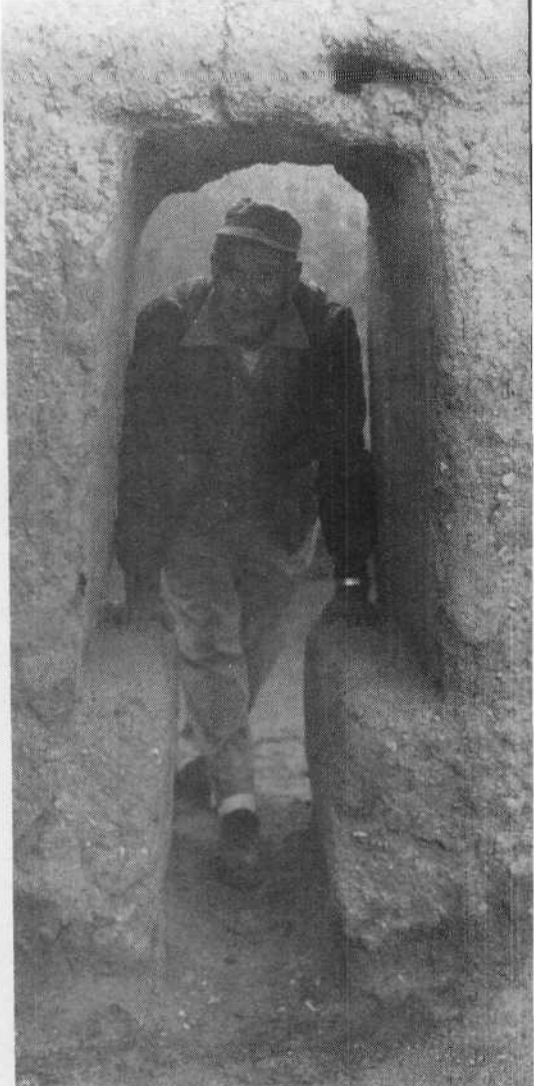
Typical "T"-shaped doorways permitted limited access.

from a spring. Water from the nearby river does not appear to have been used for domestic purposes. Could it have been polluted? Throughout the complex, channels beneath the floor provided drainage. In one room, researchers found a carefully camouflaged well which would supply emergency water in case the city was isolated under siege.

The inhabitants of Paquime must have been very concerned about attacks by neighboring tribes. On a prominent hilltop some five miles away lies the ruins of what was apparently an observation tower. Lumholtz found the ruins of a structure 40 feet in diameter having four distinct rooms inside. How high the tower once stood remains a matter of speculation. Whatever its height, this hilltop fortress certainly had a commanding view of the surrounding countryside.

Today, it is easy to visit the Paquime ruins. From Deming, New Mexico, take State Route 11 south to Columbus. This is the site of Pancho Villa's famous raid on March 9, 1916. Cross the border at Las Palomas and continue south on the paved road. At a point 19 miles below the border, turn right on Mexican Highway #2. It is 52 miles to Janos, once a presidio protecting the area from the ferocious Apache. From Janos follow the pavement south. After 38 miles you will enter Colonia Dublan. This was a thriving community of Mormon expatriates from Utah around the turn of the last century. The village also served as headquarters for General Blackjack Pershing in his punitive expedition against Pancho Villa. Today, Colonia Dublan merges with the rapidly growing agricultural center of Nuevo Casas Grandes.

Although definitely not a tourist town, Nuevo Casas Grandes does offer all the supplies and services a traveler could want. It also has two modern motels. Nuevo Casas Grandes owes its existence first to the railroad which got it started, and second to the large agricultural developments which grew up around it. The original Casas Grandes is still 15 miles farther south. With all of the hustle and bustle taking place in Nuevo Casas Grandes, old Casas Grandes retains all of the charm of a quiet Mexican village. I'm sure the local residents wish to keep it that way. From Columbus,



New Mexico to old Casas Grandes it is a total distance of 125 miles. The roads are good all the way and there is no reason why the drive couldn't be done in two or three hours.

At the main square in old Casas Grandes, turn left across from the church. Signs will direct you to the archaeological zone. It is less than a mile from the plaza. The caretaker of the site may or may not ask for the admission fee of a few pesos. Visitor information facilities have not yet been developed and there are no guide books published on the area. You will simply have to wander through the ruins on your own. Such things as the aqueducts, the "T"-shaped doorways, and the parrots' cages are easy to recognize. You may have to climb one of the low mounds, however, to get the proper perspective to recognize the "I"-shaped ball court and the Toltec cross.

Regardless of whether you visit Paquime enroute to somewhere else, or make a special trip, I am certain you will find the visit interesting and worthwhile.

BOLDEST FORTYNINER

Continued from Page 31

one they all made together. Here they killed oxen, drying the meat as best they could. And here Martin and Townsend brought in the Gunsight silver. He had held it in his hands. It was silver.

The terrors of Death Valley increased in the minds of most Fortyniners as the years passed. But to Rood it seemed to be just a place to hunt lost silver, with miscellaneous exploring and prospecting on the side. The crisscross exploration he made in 1869—the first on record for some areas—was a remarkable feat.

From Summit Camp Rood and his party prospected east and north across the Panamints, then south to a canyon coming down from Telescope Peak. This they entered by sliding their animals down to the bottom—one man on each side—and followed it to the Valley floor. Going north past the Bennett-Arcane camp of 1849, they crossed the Valley through "saleratus and salt" to Furnace Creek.

Salt Creek, with the northern tip of the Panamints [dark, left].

The Fortyniners followed part of this creek to Salt Spring, where they camped.

Then, following the wheel ruts of the emigrant wagons, which Miller said could be seen hundreds of yards ahead, they reached Salt Spring and the scattered wagon remains. Continuing to track wagon ruts eight or nine miles westerly, they lost them in the sand dunes. Then Rood turned toward the Panamints and Summit Camp.

For several days they camped and prospected at a spring Miller called Grapevine, seven miles from Summit (Emigrant) Pass. Although the compass direction is wrong, the mileage and later description seem to identify it as Emigrant Spring. To be nearer the abundant grass on the Summit, they moved up the wash about two miles to "Doves' Spring" where they stayed some time "prospecting between the two valleys"—presumably Death and Panamint. Doves' Spring remains a puzzler, since Upper Emigrant is only about a mile up



the wash, and Jayhawker Spring, about three miles distant, is in no wash leading to the Summit.

The expedition returned to Salt Spring and continued up the Valley to Mesquite Flat. Here their real adventures began. Three Indians they found hiding near a small water hole signaled their brethren, and soon 35 more, armed with bows and arrows, came charging down the mesa. Apache-fighter Rood took over. "Keep cool, boys. Don't get excited," he said. "I expect they will get us, but we will stay together and give them the best we have got, and get as many of them as we can."

When the charging warriors were 200 yards off, Rood shouted in Spanish for them to stop. One understood Spanish. They stopped. Rood and the Spanish-speaking Indian parleyed.

"If you are friends," Rood said, "lay down your weapons and come on and we will get you something to eat and show you we are friends. If you come closer with your weapons, we will fire."

Miller wrote: "About half of them threw down their arms and started toward us. Rood unpacked one of the mules with provisions. He told them to come on, and stopped them about 20 yards from us. He told them to stay there until he prepared a meal. Rood told us not to let them get any closer. They might jump on us and try to overpower us, and take our guns away from us, that being an old trick of the Indians."

"We managed to keep them back until

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the meal was prepared. Then he took it out to them and spread it on the ground for them. The others, who had not come in yet, could not resist any longer. They threw their weapons on the ground, came on, and joined in the feast. Judging from the looks of them, they needed it."

Before that feast was over, Rood had commandeered an Indian to guide the party to grass and water, in return for pay, food, and a suit of clothes. He promised to bring the guide back by a certain date, but warned that treachery would bring his death.

Rood slept with the guide, to keep from losing him, and the others kept night watch as they continued up Death Valley for about 45 miles. Here they turned in to a grassy, watered glade with cottonwood trees in the Grapevine Mountains—probably near present Scotty's Castle. About 20 Indians were in sight, and after the guide talked with them, they beckoned the whites to come on. Rood's party camped about 100 yards from the Indians, surrounding their camp with breastworks of saddles and rocks, and tying their animals close by.

"There was quite a stream of water running there," Miller wrote. "They had put a dam across the stream, and backed the water up, and formed a pond, and had built blinds, and as the ducks swam up to them, they would kill them. The squaws would skin them with their fingers. Then they would take their long

thumb-nails and strip every bit of meat from the bone, and lay the meat in the sun to dry. They would throw the guts on the fire, and roast them, and eat them then and there."

When the time came to take their Indian guide home, as promised, they worked their way down and across Death Valley and up Cottonwood Canyon. They found the band encamped at the cottonwoods and abundant water of Cottonwood Spring, and stayed overnight with them.

"The next morning we left that camp," wrote Miller. "One Indian was moving his family to another place, and went along with us until we came to a trail that led back east to the head of Panamint Valley. That was the last we saw of our Indian friends. We went on into Panamint Valley, up Wildrose Canyon, north over the Summit, on the Death Valley side to the Grapevine Springs. We prospected about; found plenty of good-looking quartz, but nothing that would pay to pack out on a mule."

Because of the food they had given the Indians—"about a month's supply,"

Miller said—their provisions ran out. It would have been hot by then, but when Rood's party left Death Valley, earlier than intended, it was not because of heat and terror, but because they were hungry.

His failure to find the Lost Gunsight in 1869 did not discourage Bill Rood, nor W. W. McCoy, either. McCoy still wanted to hunt for the lost ledge with Rood, and Rood was willing. McCoy must have made such a search eventually, as his name is prominent on a rock at Jayhawker Spring.

But he did not go with Bill Rood.

The expedition with McCoy was planned for May, 1870. April 29, 1870, Rood and his foreman Alex Poindexter started to cross the Colorado from the ranch to the California side in a small boat.

The river was rising and a gale was blowing. The boat struck a snag and capsized. Poindexter reached the shore. Bill Rood did not. The day Rood was due to arrive in San Bernardino, to start again for Death Valley, McCoy received the news he had drowned in the Colorado. □

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SELDOM SEEN SLIM

Continued from Page 13

relic hunters and four-wheelers stumbled across his lone camp, they would stop and chat, take pictures and tell their friends.

In a few short years, Slim became something akin to a desert philosopher, although he usually didn't have much philosophy to dispense. He enjoyed the attention, and always found "outsiders" generous to a fault. They brought him groceries, clothes, camping gear, and were known to slip him a few bucks on the side, just for the privilege of calling him a friend.

Then another thing happened that changed his life dramatically. Ballarat townsite was sold and an enterprising outsider arrived to build a trailer park and air conditioned general store almost across the road from Slim. It was no secret the developer would have liked to see Slim move on to greener pastures, but he was afraid to do anything that might cause embarrassment. So Slim stayed on in peace. Actually, as it turned out, more people came to see Slim than the developer and after an expenditure of more than \$60,000, he closed up the shop and left the empty "trailer court" for good.

"He didn't even have money for gas when he left," Slim recounted later. "He almost couldn't leave town." With the trailer park scheme a fizzle, Slim was left alone again with jackrabbits for company. But his world was changed for good. Others came and reopened the store and Slim was never alone after that. Not that it mattered, he was nearing the end of life's long trail.

Throughout his life, Slim had been his own man. Neither the government, well-intentioned welfare workers, claim jumpers or hordes of "city slickers" had ever told him what to do. It wasn't until his health started to fail that Slim even left Ballarat in the blistering summer months when temperatures reached 130 degrees. When he did leave, it wasn't to go far. He would go to Trona and rent a small cabin where the temperatures were only about 120 degrees.

Welfare workers did their best to get Slim out of his camp and into a rest home. "Rest home!" he would growl. "I'm resting here just fine." A few of his

friends suggested that the main objection Slim had to a rest home was the fact he would have had to take frequent baths. He liked to brag he only took a bath twice a year, and then only in the rain.

"I like soft water for my skin," he once told the author, "so I wait for the sky to give me a shower." The reason for bathing celibacy was probably much simpler than that. Water was scarce, and Slim just got out of the habit.

Slim was tough. His austere life had conditioned him to the rigors of living on the edges of Death Valley and braving the freezing cold of winter and scorching temperatures of summer, but cancer was something he couldn't fight. Friends found him suffering in his trailer and rushed him to Trona where doctors tried to arrest the ravages of the dread disease in his body.

Slim had lived more than 50 years "30 miles from a drink of water" and got along fine, but he only lasted a few days in the comforts of civilization. Even though he once lived an almost hermit-like existence, the world still beat a path to his door. He was an unusual man who lived far beyond the humdrum, frenetic existence most people call life. He was free from the claims of money, ambition and comfort. Seldom Seen Slim took life as he found it and rarely tried to improve it. Hardships and privations were everyday facts of life, not something to be dread.

No bill collectors knocked at his door, only friends. There were no utilities to pay, no bank interest to collect, and no mortgage to worry about. Even his car was paid for. Slim had neatly solved the problems of modern life by never changing his own way of doing things.

Television stations came to interview Slim and find out his "secret" of life. If he had a secret, he never revealed it, at least not on TV! For his funeral, scores of mourners showed up, most of them "outsiders" who knew Slim in happier times. He was carried to the Ballarat Boot Hill, and became the first person to be buried there in almost 50 years.

A simple tombstone marks the grave of a simple man, a man who met the 20th Century on his own terms and came out ahead. There may never be another man like Seldom Seen Slim, but then, as the philosopher once said, "They don't make them like they used to." □

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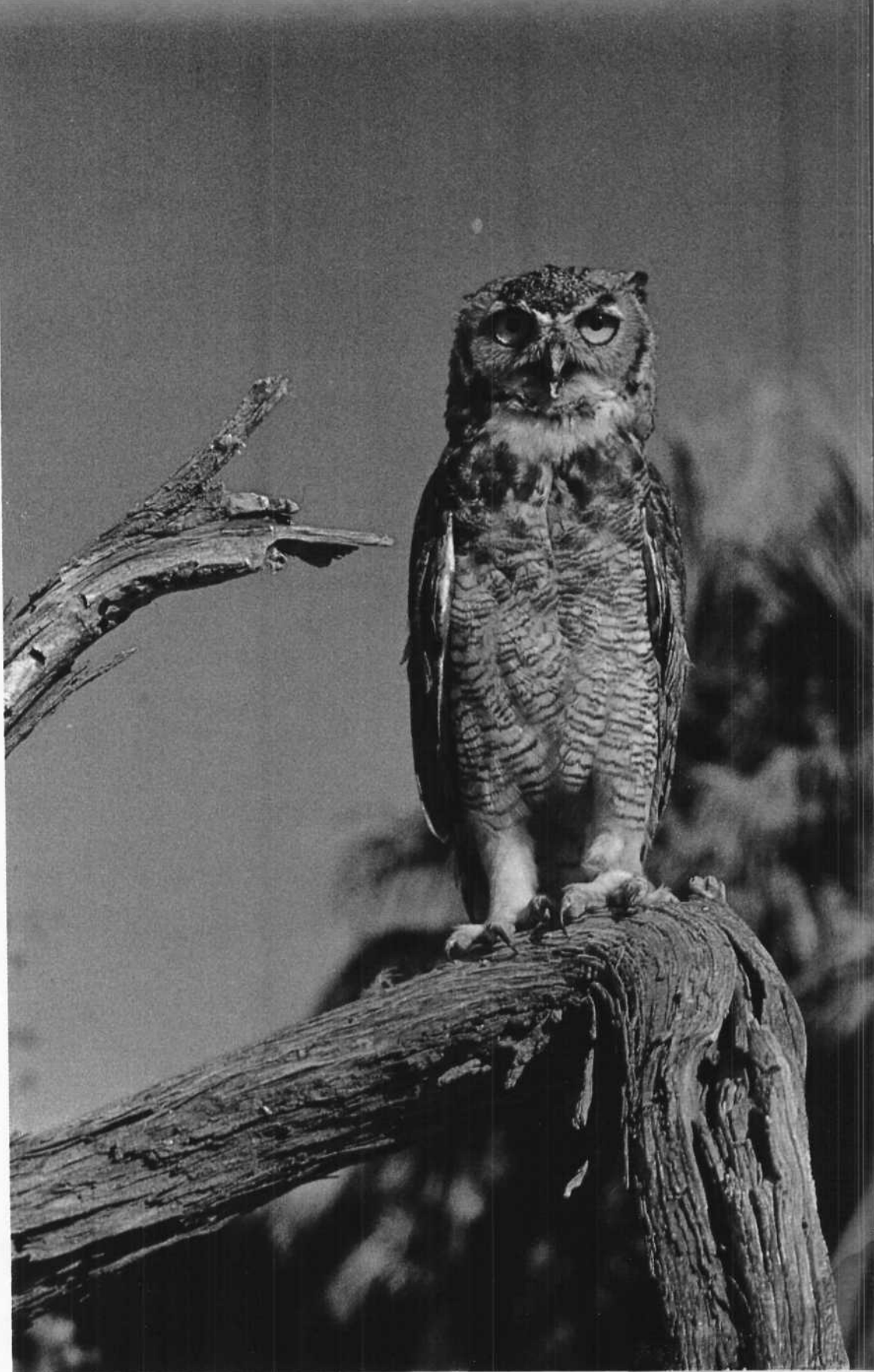


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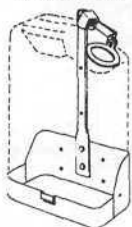
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THE HIMALAYA MINE: Home of Fine Tourmaline

SAN DIEGO County, California has a large number of mines located on pegmatite dikes. Many gem minerals are found there, but the most spectacular are the tourmalines that appear in many of the mines. If we might use tourmaline as the indicator of the best of these mines, then the Himalaya, near the small town of Mesa Grande, is the best. Not only, in our minds at least, is this one of the finest mines in the county, it is probably the oldest. Tourmaline crystals were discovered at Mesa Grande in 1880.

The Himalaya produces a wonderful array of colors and clarity of tourmaline. The most common is a fine pink of medium hue. Excellent green crystals are also found; some with yellow overtones. Some blue, and a few nearly colorless are also present. A large percentage of these are flawless, or nearly so. Most of these bring very high prices as display specimens. The broken crys-

als are cut into gems.

The most highly prized are the bi-colored crystals; one end pink, the other green. Many of these are about two inches long and one-eighth to one-quarter inch in width. These have been called tourmaline pencils. Some reach lengths of nearly six inches, and nearly an inch in width.

This mine contains a large percentage of what are called cat's-eye crystals. Such crystals are at least partially filled with very small tubes. When light is reflected from these tubes, the light follows along the tubes as the crystal is tipped. When cut in cabochon gems, this light reflection becomes very narrow, much resembling a fine chrysoberyl cat's eye.

During the early 1900s, the mine produced so many crystals that the market was somewhat glutted. The miners became careless, and looked only for the larger crystals. Many excellent smaller crystals were thrown into the dumps, and became prizes for the amateurs in the 1950s.

About 1910, the mine was purchased by a Chinese, and the larger crystals, some about two inches in cross section, were sent to China and were carved into bottles and other art objects. The Chinese liked the translucent crystals best, and again, much of the clear gem material found its way into the dumps. With the fall of the Chinese Dynasty a few years later, mining ceased, and the property was sold. Up to the 1960s, no mining was done and the tunnels caved in. Only a watchman remained on the property. He was a friendly individual, and welcomed amateur collectors as long as they worked the dumps. As these were prolific, no one thought of trying get into the mine, even though some openings were visible. Why go into a potentially dangerous mine when the dumps contained numerous fine crystals? All that was necessary was a few digging tools, a screen and plenty of ambition.

As might be expected, there is a good number of accessory minerals. Some are very rare. Surprisingly, however, some of the expected minerals, such as garnet, topaz and beryl are not common.

The crystal pockets in the Himalaya are typical, lined with quartz and microcline feldspar. Intermixed with and attached to these are the tourmalines. Quartz crystals, commonly up to four or

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five inches in length, and studded with clear tourmalines are common. Well-shaped microcline crystals, eight or more inches in length, and weighing over five pounds were also common. Often the microclines had tourmalines growing out of them, or attached to their sides. Most of these are breathtaking specimens.

To the mineralogist, the rarer accessory minerals were of great interest. Fine pink apatites up to three inches long, and greatly resembling tourmaline crystals, were sometimes found. The mineral stibiotantalite (a combination of antimony, tantalum and niobium) was found in fine crystals. The crystals from here are still considered to be the world's finest. Sometimes, some of these, nearly flawless, were attached to perfect tourmaline crystals.

Cassiterite, the oxide of tin, has been found here in fine lustrous black crystals. Some of these were also attached to tourmalines. On rare occasions a columbite crystal was found.

Even though beryl is rare here, a perfectly flawless chunk of morganite, nearly as large as a fist, was found in recent years. The color much resembled fine apple jelly.

Hambegite is a pegmatite mineral that is never common at any of its occurrences. Here it is found in nearly perfect small crystals, some a clear colorless, and capable of being faceted.

The purple variety of mica, lepidolite, is very common. It is found as flakes scattered through the dumps. Often, a nice perfectly-shaped crystal is found. These are often attached to the sides of tourmaline, quartz or microcline crystals.

Albite feldspar is also common. It is in the form known as clevelandite, in thin plate-like crystals that often resemble white rose petals. These also are attached to tourmaline, quartz and microcline.

Many of the fine specimens from the Himalaya are a combination of quartz, microcline and tourmaline, and studded with albite and lepidolite.

In the early 1960s, the mine was purchased by Ralph Potter, a mineral collector turned miner. He opened the original tunnel and found it filled with rubble. This rubble was evidently carelessly pulled down from above by the last operators in hopes of finding a few last pockets without the usual cleanup care. The rubble was hauled out to a dump

without any examination. The personal friends of Mr. Potter (of which we were fortunate to be classed) were allowed to search through this dump. If we thought the old dumps were good when we worked them in the 1950s, we found the new dump to be a real surprise. It was wonderful.

During the period of Mr. Potter's operations, he opened many pockets, but to everyone's surprise, he found few gem-quality crystals. He found many fine specimens, however, and had a ready market for all of them.

On one of our trips during this time, we arrived just as a pocket was being approached. We had the privilege of standing to the side, with a flash camera in hand, and photographing the working out of the pocket from beginning to end. This took the better part of two days. We even had the pleasure of digging out some crystals while the miner took a cigarette break. Pockets in the mine are filled with a sticky red mud, and all crystals are embedded in it. We were cleaning mud off our camera months later!

Mr. Potter could not resist setting aside some of the finest specimens as he came upon them. Soon he had a collection second to none. We had the privilege of photographing most of these. The collection has now been sold, and its disposition is unknown to us.

After about 10 years, Mr. Potter tired of the operation and sold off shares in the mine; each person owning a tenth. The mine has been leased out to various operators, but none have been very successful. There is no doubt in the minds of knowledgeable mineralogists that the mine still holds plenty of treasure. It is quietly sitting there in the Laguna Mountains waiting for a new operator with the necessary expertise and a love for fine crystals. When he appears, The Himalaya will have another day. □

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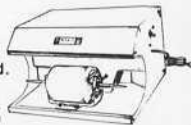
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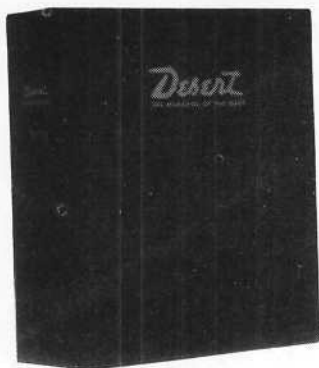
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DESERT WAYFARER

Continued from Page 27

with acid-containin' cardboard or other harmful chemicals.

When the paper is ready Purcell inks his plate, rubbin' the long-lastin' colors on with a small rag, brushin' this way and that to blend them together. When he is finally satisfied with the colors he puts the plate face-up on the bed of his etchin' press, lays the readied paper on top o' the plate and draws the roller across plate and paper.

Then it's jury time. I watched while Purcell removed a freshly-run etchin' from the press, saw his eyes narrow as he held it up close, studyin' the detail, flow o' color and overall image. Then, all to once his face lit up like a back-home sunset as he handed the etchin' to me—he was satisfied with the "scald" he'd got!

The time and work involved in etchin' began to sink in on my brain when I learned that Roy has to ink the plate fer each and every etchin' (sometimes called print) and that if he is not satisfied with the look o' any etchin' he destroys it. Since he inks the plate separately fer each etchin' no two are ever colored the same. As a result, each etchin' (print) is considered an original.

The etchin' process has other hardships to offer; plates wear rapidly, causin' the prints to lose sharpness and detail. But Purcell avoids that problem by printin' only 100 or less of each plate.

After approvin' each print Purcell places it in a dryin' rack. Several hours later he studies the now dry print once more. If it is okay he will sign it, then give it its number. Each and every print of the limited editions is numbered. This provides a way o' showing how many etchin's have been run, and so on.

Cousins, I told you earlier that Purcell works backward; now, I'll explain. Say, that Purcell draws an ol' cabin on the right side o' his plate. Got it? Well, when it is printed the cabin will be on the left side o' the picture, so he has to be thinkin' all the time to make sure that anything he prints comes out the way it looks in real life. But, sometimes he goofs, bein' human. He laughed as he told me 'bout the time he went to all the work o' drawin' the Judge Roy Bean cabin down in Texas. When he printed it, somehow it jist didn't seem right.

That was when he found out he'd drawn it so that the final etchin' come out backwards. As a result he threwed the plate away; if it wasn't right he wouldn't use it.

Now Roy's many years o' trompin' through the deserts, takin' pictures and plannin' is payin' off. A few years ago he met a human dyamo name o' Charley Aldridge who had quite a bit of success in his own right as a musician-songwriter-movie ranch operator and all-around promoter. (Charley served for eight years on the Rodeo-Statefair circuit as road manager and musical-conductor for Dan Blocker, Clint Eastwood, Jack Lord, Lorne Green, Irene "Granny" Ryan, Clint Walker and several other stars.)

Charley was quick to see the potential in Roy Purcell's talents, and he and Roy formed a partnership that has resulted in Purcell's works now bein' shown in 90 galleries across the country; the production o' several books, such as "Wells Fargo; The Legend," with Dale Robertson, "The Wayfarer," a book of Roy's etchin's and poetry, and a recently released book, "Colorado River Ghost Towns," published with Stan Paher and containin' 16 pages in true color o' Roy's artwork. Also, Roy's art is given away from time to time on the NBC Television show, "Wheel of Fortune," plus, Charley has Roy's future filled with one-man shows throughout the art world's finest galleries and personal appearances on top television shows. (I have personally known Charley Aldridge for over 25 years and only mention his part of Roy's career to show what a live-wire promoter can do for an artist. For it is a sad fact that so many artists create their work, then have to try to sell it themselves, often at pitifully low prices.)

In this spread you'll see some o' Roy's artwork. Typical o' what's happenin' is that when his limited editions are sold out the prices soar; then his etchin's sell for several times their original cost in the galleries. A hard worker, Roy has etched over 600 plates, most about the West.

When the hassel and noise o' the concrete canyons get to ridin' him too heavy, Purcell throws his bedroll in the back o' his van and heads fer the wide open spaces. There he finds peace and solitude. He recharges and gets his strength from the desert—maybe that's why he is able to recreate it on paper so well, even though he has to do it backwards! □

Letters to the Editor

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope

It Shouldn't Happen to a Dog . . .

The Racetrack is truly a long way from centers of civilization in Death Valley National Monument. I know it takes a long time for news to go out over those 25 miles of poor to terrible road, so I do not wonder that Glenn and Martha Vargas never got the straight word on those wonderful wandering rocks which inhabit that remote area.

An old prospector, known to his friends as "Whispering Willie" Watson, lived on the shore of that distant dry lake for many years, observed the wandering rocks during their rare peregrinations and personally told me the following story after I finally worked up enough nerve to ask him why he usually, but not always, talked in a tight-lipped whisper. I can vouch for the total truth of this story since anyone who ever knew Willie will swear to you that he never told a lie in his whole life. Which is more than I can say for some power line maintenance men who sometimes have to explain missing power poles.

Willie lived in a rock cabin under a protecting cliff on the eastern shore of the desert playa we now call "The Racetrack." His cabin was tight up under the bluff, in the shade of some large boulders, there protected from other smaller rocks that sometimes dislodged from the steep slope above to leap and bound down the mountainside and out onto the hard beige surface of the dry lake. The house was but a few feet above and beyond the lake bottom and was well guarded against the wind which howled mightily across the valley on stormy nights, which luckily wasn't very often.

But when the wind did blow, Whispering Willie had a problem. His pet mountain sheep were fully capable of fending for themselves, but his big English Sheep Dog (the kind that looks out through his hair like a four-legged hippie) had trouble keeping his footing in anything worse than just an ordinary high wind. So when the really big gales blew, usually during or after the torrential rains that occasionally hit the region, Willie kept his big dog inside, in the stone house.

However, on this particular night of which I speak, hurricane gale or no, the dog had to go out. Which was the last that was ever seen of him, almost.

After a decent interval, Willie had opened the door a bit, peered out, and called. No answer. This procedure was repeated several times, always with the same negative results.

Willie's worries over his dog finally overcame his fear of the wind. Muffled up for protection, he ventured out into the blast. In the dim light he could see water that had but recently collected on the usually dry lake surface was now churned into whitecaps. Series of waves beat a tattoo on the isolated detrital rocks that littered the otherwise smooth surface. Under the action of pounding waves, a powerful wind and a very slippery lake bottom, the partially floated heavy objects jiggled about quite handily. This was a scene no outsider has ever witnessed, presumably because he has too much sense to visit dry lakes in such weather, especially remote dry lakes. But Whispering Willie and his dog were both there. And the dog was in deep trouble.

Hanging on for dear life (probably to one of those power poles which was about to move), the dog spotted Willie and let out a howl of terror. He got Willie's attention, all right, but his wide open jaw also caught the full force of an especially hard gust of wind that ripped it open and instantly turned the dog inside out. Suffocated in his own shaggy coat, the dog relaxed his grip, bounced across the lake and was never seen again.

And what about Whispering Willie? Oh, he made it back to the house all right, to live a while and watch the rocks move about on the Racetrack at least one more time. But Willie never got another dog. He just couldn't. Incidentally, inside that stone house of his, Willie never whispered. His big voice, tired of restraint, always echoed from the hard stone walls. But outside, he always whispered. The event herein honestly recounted cured Willie of any desire to open his mouth outdoors.

You can check the veracity of this tale by talking to any of the many friends of Whispering Willie Watson. Unfortunately, it is too late to ask Willie. He was killed many years ago, the last time the stones on his lake moved during a particularly hard blow on the Racetrack. Convinced he heard his long lost canine friend scratching at the door, Willie relaxed his guard a bit and opened his cabin door just a crack. He was sucked out through the opening by the fierce wind, blown out on to the recently flooded playa, and was run over by several rambling rocks.

After 40 years you can still easily identify the site of Willie's sad demise. Dry mud ridges can still be seen where some of the moving rocks caromed off Willie's prostrate body in long arcing curves, while other rocks, striking the helpless man more solidly, bounded over the body and left a gap in their otherwise unbroken trail across the lake bottom.

Yes, little has changed in 40 years.

JOHN SOUTHWORTH,
Burbank, California.

Editor's Note: The policy of the magazine does not usually allow such lengthy "Letters to the Editor." But due to its timeliness for the Death Valley issue, and the unusual content, an exception has been made!

Calendar of Events

This column is a public service and there is no charge for listing your event or meeting—so take advantage of the space by sending in your announcement. We must receive the information at least three months prior to the event.

NOVEMBER 3-7, Las Vegas Gem Club presents their 5th Annual Gem Show, "Happy Birthday Gems of America" at the Jaycee Bicentennial State Fair, Las Vegas Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. Displays, Guest exhibits, demonstrations and dealers.

NOVEMBER 6 & 7, Montebello Mineral and Lapidary Society's Annual Gem and Mineral Show, The Gardens Masonic Temple, 6310 East Olympic Blvd., East Los Angeles, Calif. Dealer space filled, admission free. Show Chairman: Jack Davis, 3344 Lexington Ave., El Monte, Calif. 91731.

NOVEMBER 6 & 7, Bear Gulch Rock Club's 14th Annual Gem and Mineral Show. Masonic Hall, 1025 N. Vine Ave., Ontario, California 91761. Dealer space filled. Exhibits, demonstrations, food. Free admission and parking. Show Chairman: Reatha Reedus, 528 N. Mills Ave., Claremont, Calif. 91711.

NOVEMBER 11-14, Death Valley Encampment, in the Stovepipe Wells and Furnace Creek areas of the National Monument. Hotel accommodations limited, so plan to "camp under the desert stars." Campfire meetings, historical talks, guided tours and exhibits. Fun for the whole family.

NOVEMBER 20 & 21, The Indian Wells Gem and Mineral Society presents its 20th Annual Show at the Community Center, China Lake, Calif. Field trips, admission free. Contact: Chairman Margaret Murphy, 55-A Stroop, China Lake, Calif. 93555.

DECEMBER 4 & 5, 7th Annual "Red Carpet" Gem and Mineral Show, Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main St., Santa Monica, Calif. Outstanding professional and amateur displays, working demonstrations. Dealer spaces filled. Show Chairman Bob King, 1826 9th St., Manhattan Beach, Calif. 90266.

FEBRUARY 26 & 27, Gem and Mineral Show sponsored by the Santa Clara Valley Gem and Mineral Society, Inc., Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, Pavilion Bldg., 344 Tully Road, San Jose, Calif.



6084 "... may that Holy Star ... fill the world with light." - May the blessing of Christmas be yours, etc.



6109 Christmas Eve at San Ildefonso Pueblo - May the warmth and love...at Christmas fill your heart...



6120 Santa's Surprise Visit - May your Christmas be the Merriest and your New Year the Happiest



6114 "Christmas is but one more word for love" - Wishing you all the love ... that Christmas brings



6132 Santa's Pack Train - Packing in loads of joy for Christmas with lots of wishes for the New Year

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6124 "... the candles in the sky ..." - Wishing you a Christmas that is bright with Promise, etc.



6111 "Gift of light...your day has come unto the World" - May the Gift of Light be yours this Christmas



6123 "... a shaft of light ..." - May the ancient miracle of Christmas bring the abiding love, etc.



6108 "Let Christmas be a bright and happy day ..." - May the Radiance of Christmas ... abide with you...



6087 "Keeping Christmas" - May the spirit of Christmas abide with you all through the coming year



6088 "... Let us hold close this day ..." - With every good wish for a Merry Christmas and Happy Year



6117 "Such beauty restores my soul." - Thinking of you and wishing you happiness at Christmas, etc.



6092 "The Littlest Angel and most precious lambs, looked down ..." - Hope your Christmas is heavenly!



6150 "May our hearts be open to all ..." - May this Christmas season bring you love and peace



6089 "... Teach us to walk the soft earth ..." - May the Great Spirit honor you at Christmas, etc.



6086 "Come ye ... into a desert place ..." - May you have ... the Heart of Christmas which is Love.



6112 Quaint Spanish Mission - Peace and Hope for all the World, Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo



6080 The Desert Bird Express! - Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

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